

No.2

SPRING
ISSUE

5 FAVORITE FEATURES!



IND

Leading COMICS

10¢



SEVEN
SOLDIERS
OF VICTORY
VERSUS
"THE BLACK STAR"



DEADLY BLACK LIGHT THAT BURNS OUT THE GOOD IN MAN AND LEAVES ONLY EVIL... FIVE GEARING RAYS, EACH A SWORD-THrust AT THE HEART OF SOCIETY... THIS IS THE BRAND OF THE **BLACK STAR** WHO'S DIABOLICAL DESIGN FOR STEALING CONFUSED THE CHAMPIONS OF AMERICAN JUSTICE... WHO ROCKED THE EARTH WITH HIS WHISPERED WARNING: **BEWARE! THE BLACK STAR SHINES!**

THE GLEEK PEMBERTON CAR THREADS ITS WAY THROUGH THE CITY'S BUSINESS DISTRICT...



PUT DOWN THAT BOOK, GYLVESTER. TODAY YOU'RE GOING TO LEARN ABOUT BANKING.

DON'T BE TIRE-SOM, FATHER! ANTHROPOLOGY IS FAR MORE INTERESTING THAN FINANCE!

SORRY, GIR. YOU'LL HAVE TO WALK TO THE BANK FROM HERE. THEY'RE REPAIRING THE STREET.



REALLY, DAD, YOU COULD HIRE A MORE EFFICIENT CHAUFFEUR. HOW MANY TIMES MUST I INSIST YOU FIRE DUSAN?

YOU CAN'T SPEND YOUR LIFE BURIED IN BOOKS, SON. THOSE MEN ACCOMPLISH MORE IN AN HOUR THAN YOU DO IN A YEAR! YOU MUST LEARN TO WORK, TOO.

PLEASE STOP LECTURING ME, DAD. YOU'RE BORING ME.



AS FEMBERTON AND HIS FATHER ENTER THE BANK, THERE IS A THUNDERING EXPLOSION, AS TONS OF WATER GURGE OUT OF BLASTED WATER-MAING IN A FOAMING GEYSER,...

BATTERED BY THE BRUTE FORCE OF HYDRAULIC PRESSURE, SOLID ROCK CRUMBLES LIKE WET SAND....

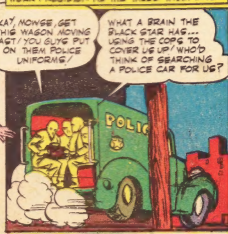


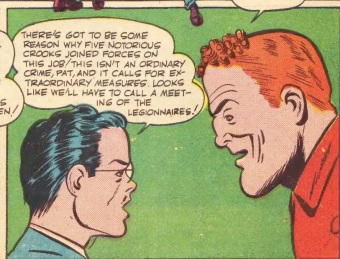
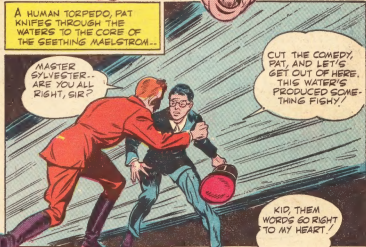
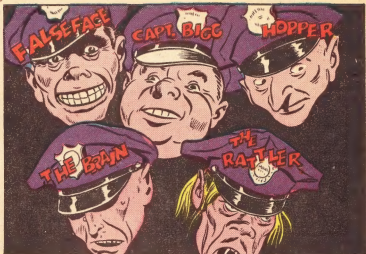
LIKE WEIRD MONSTERS FROM THE OCEAN DEPTHS, FIVE FANTASTIC FIGURES STALK IN THE FLOODED BANK....

CONFUSION REIGNS! AND THE MAN-MADE DELUSE CAMOUFLAGES A DARING COUP!



THE CRIME SCHEDULE CLICKS WITH CLOCK, WORK PRECISION AS THE THUGS VAULT INTO





MEANWHILE,
AS
THE
LAWLESS
FIVE
DRIVE
LEISURELY
THROUGH
THE
CITY,
SNERING
AT
THE
THOUGHT
OF
POSSIBLE
PURSUIT...

THIS JOB WAS JUST
A WARM-UP, BUT IT
PROVIDED US WITH
CAPITAL. WHEN DO
WE REALLY GET TO WORK?
I'M ITCHIN' FOR ACTION.

YOU'LL GET IT,
RATTLER. HEY, MOWGE,
DID YOU PICK UP THEM
MOVIE FILMS LIKE
THE BLACK STAR
TOLD US?

YES, SIR, I GOT THEM,
SIR, BUT IF I HAD KNOWN
YOU GENTLEMEN WERE
CRIMINALS I WOULDN'T
HAVE TAKEN THE JOB.
I WISH TO TENDER MY
RESIGNATION, SIR.

OKAY, MOWGE
M-LAD, YOU'RE
FIRED... JUST AS
SOON AS WE'RE
FINISHED WITH
YOU!

WHAT'S THE
IDEA OF THE BLACK
STAR ONLY TALKING
TO US IN PITCHERS?
COULDN'T HE JUST
AS WELL CALL A
MEETING OR SOME-
THING?

PERSONALLY, I
PREFER THIS
LONG DISTANCE
METHOD. I'VE
BEEN AROUND
SOME, BUT THE
BLACK STAR SEEMS
A LITTLE TOO TOUGH
FOR MY TASTE!

WEIRD SYMBOL OF BLACK STAR'S
POWER... THE PROJECTOR FLASHES
AN OMINOUS IMAGE ON THE SCREEN...

THIS IS THE BLACK STAR.
GREETINGS! YOU MEN HAVE
FOLLOWED MY INSTRUCTIONS
WELL. CONTINUE, AND THERE
WILL BE NO LIMIT TO YOUR
SUCCESS AND POWER!

EACH OF YOU WILL WORK ALONE
FROM NOW ON. FALSEFACE GOES
TO NEW ORLEANS... CAPTAIN BIGGS
TO KEY WEST... THE HOPPER TO
PLEASURE CITY... THE RATTLER
TO THE MALIPAIS IN NEW MEXICO...
AND THE BRAIN TO TWIN CITY.

WHEN YOU REACH YOUR ASSIGNED
DESTINATION, I WILL SEND MOTION
PICTURE FILMS TO YOU CONTAIN-
ING FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS. IF
YOU CARRY OUT MY PLANS, YOU CAN-
NOT FAIL! BUT REMEMBER THIS... IF
YOU FAIL, I WILL SEEK YOU OUT, NO
MATTER WHERE YOU MAY HIDE... AND
THEN BEWARE MY VENGEANCE!

THAT GUY
GIVES ME
THE CHILLS!

YEAH, AND HE GIVES
IDEAS, TOO! WE WAG
JUST SMALL TIME,
M'LAD, UNTIL THE
BLACK STAR TOOK
OVER. NOW WE GOT
THE CHANCE TO GO
PLACES!

RIGHT!

BUT WITH THE SWIFTNESS OF HUNTING FALCON, THE SEVEN WHO ARE LEAGUED AGAINST CRIME GATHER IN ANSWER TO THE STAR SPANGLED KID'S CALL TO ARMS!

...AND I SUSPECT THAT THESE FIVE CRIMINALS HAVE MERGED THEIR SINISTER STRENGTH IN ONE POWERFUL ORGANIZATION AGAINST SOCIETY AND JUSTICE. GENTLEMEN, THIS CALLS FOR ACTION FROM ALL OF US!

WE'RE ALL RIDIN' THE GAME SADDLE WITH YOU.

I VOTE WE PICK UP THE TRAIL AT ONCE!



THE ARROWPLANE...FASTEST VEHICLE ON WHEELS, STREAKS THE LEGION OF SEVEN TO THE SCENE OF THE CRIME...



HOLD ON A MINUTE! WHAT'S THAT IN THE STREET?

WE SAW THEM HERE, DRIVING AWAY IN A POLICE CAR. WE MAY HAVE HAVE TO TRACK THEM THROUGH THE WHOLE CITY.



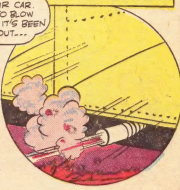
THAT LOOKS LIKE GUN-POWDER TO ME...

GUN-POWDER! YOU SAID IT, GREEN ARROW!

THEY MUST HAVE PLenty IN THEIR CAR. THEY USED IT TO BLOW UP THE MAIN. IT'S BEEN LEAKING OUT...



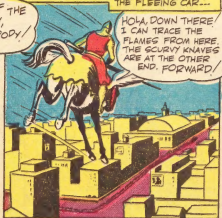
A SPARK FLIES FROM THE SUPERCHARGED EXHAUST OF THE ARROWPLANE AND TOUCHES OFF THE TRAIN OF EXPLOSIVE...



WATCH OUT! THE POWDER'S BEEN FIRED!

OUT OF THE WAY, EVERYBODY!

ABRUPTLY, A GEARING LINE OF FIRE FLARES ALONG THE CITY STREETS AFTER THE FLEEING CAR...



HOLA, DOWN THERE I CAN TRACE THE FLAMES FROM HERE. THE SCOURY KNAVES ARE AT THE OTHER END. FORWARD!

AS THE LEGIONNAIRES CHARGE ON THEIR PREY, THE REMNANTS OF THE DYNAMITE EXPLODE IN THE HOLDUP CAR !!!





HOLD EVERYTHING, KID! HERE'S SOMETHING I PICKED UP FROM THE WRECK... A PIECE OF FILM!



The Shining Knight

A GAY SOUTHERN CITY--NEW ORLEANS! THE GAYEST TIME OF THE YEAR--MARDI GRAS! THEN, THROUG', THE HAPPY REVELRY AND JOYOUS THOUBANDS, STALKS A COMPANY OF CLEVER CRIMINALS, CUNNINGLY COSTUMED LIKE THE OTHERS, BUT UNLEASHING A CAMPAIGN OF CRIME THAT STRIKES TERROR INTO ALL! UNDER COVER OF LAUGHTER AND GAIETY, LED BY THEIR HORRIBLY GRINNING MASTER, FALSEFACE, THEY TURN HUMOR INTO HORROR IN THE--

'MYSTERY OF THE CLOWNING CRIMINALS'

MARDI GRAS TIME, AND HIGH OFFICIALS OPEN THE SEASON OF MERRY-MAKING WITH A SOLEMN CEREMONY---

THIS STATUE, A MONUMENT TO THE FOUNDERS OF NEW ORLEANS, WILL BE UNVEILED BY MR. ENNIS, PRESIDENT OF THE MARDI GRAS ASSOCIATION!

THANK YOU, MR. MAYOR!

-- AND MAY THIS BEAUTIFUL BRONZE STATUE BE A SYMBOL OF THE COURAGE AND DARING OF OUR FOREFATHERS!



ABRUPTLY... THE BRONZE STATUES COME TO LIFE!



LOOK OUT BELOW!! HERE COME THE PIONEERS!

YEAH!... AN' WE'RE TRAILING BIG DOUGH!

I'LL TAKE YOUR WATCH, MAYOR!

LIKE BOLTS OF LIGHTNING THE STATUES STRIKE, STEAL, AND VANISH INTO THE MOB OF MERRY-MAKERS!

THAT'S ALL, FOLKS, THANKS FOR THE CONTRIBUTION!

YOU CAN GO BACK TO UNVEILING NOW, ENNIS!



DARTING THROUGH THE DECORATED STREETS TO THEIR HIDEOUT, THE QUICK-CHANGE CRIMINALS PREPARE FOR ANOTHER COUP...



WHAT A SWEET SET-UP! EVERYBODY IN THIS TOWN IS WEARIN' COSTUMES! THE COPS WON'T NEVER KNOW WHO TO LOOK FOR!

SHUT UP AND GET INTO THE CLOWN SUITS! WE GOTTA MEET THE NEW YORK TRAIN AT THE STATION!

MEANWHILE, IN THE STABLE CAR OF THE NEW YORK LIMITED...

BUDDY, YOU MUST BE CRAZY, LIVING HERE FOR THREE DAYS BECAUSE OF AN OLD NAG!

GADZOOO... --ER-- SOSH, MISTER, I HAD TO STAY HERE-- THERE'S NO PLACE TO SLEEP ON YOUR TRAINS-- NOTHING BUT SEATS!



ARE YOU KIDDING? WE MAKE UP BERTHS EVERY NIGHT! ANYWAY, WE'RE NEARING NEW ORLEANS, SO IF YOU OWN A COSTUME, WEAR IT! THE MARDI GRAS IS ON!

MARDI GRAS??



SWOUNDS! I REMEMBER READING ABOUT THIS HIGH REVELRY THEY HOLD--LIKE THE FEASTS OF CAMELOT! IT FEELS GOOD TO DON THIS LOYAL MAIL OF MINE AND RECAPTURE THE SPIRIT OF THOSE GREAT DAYS!



GAY, COSTUME-CLAD CROWDS GREET THE INCOMING TRAIN--

WE'RE ALL SET, BOSS! LISTEN! SIX OF YOU BREAK INTO THE BAGGAGE CAR AND GET THE MAIL! THE REST COME WITH ME TO THE PASSENGER CARS!



A CARNIVAL OF JOY TURNS INTO A CARNAGE OF CRIME AS THE LAUGHING CLOWNS TURN INTO BANDITS!

I'LL GIVE YOUSE JUST ONE MINUTE TO THROW YOUR DOUGH INTO THE AISLE!

THAT'S A NICE HUNK O' ICE YOU WERE WEARIN', LADY!



THIS IS THE WAY TO THE MAIL CAR-- C'MON, GUYS!

HERE'S ANOTHER ONE O' THEM CARNIVAL GUYS-- ONE SIDE, STUPID!

HANDS OFF, VARLET!!



AWWK!

SEASON'S GREETINGS, VILLAIN! NOW, LAUGH, CLOWN, LAUGH!!



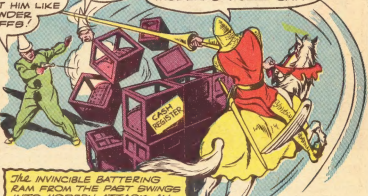
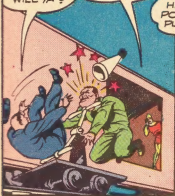
HEY! QUIT CLOWNING, WILL YA?

AHA! JUST A PAIR OF JOKERS!

WHAT KIND OF GAG IS THIS? THEM BULLETS HIT HIM LIKE POWDER PUFFS!

THE, GUYS POISON!

ZOUNDS!! BUT YE'RE A PALTRY CREW! HERE, KNAVES, IS ONE FOR THE MONEY, AS YOU MODERNS WOULD SAY!



THE INVINCIBLE BATTERING RAM FROM THE PAST SWINGS INTO MODERN ATTACK, AN ANCIENT BATTLE CRY ON HIS LIPS...

WHAT'D THE GUY HIT US WITH?

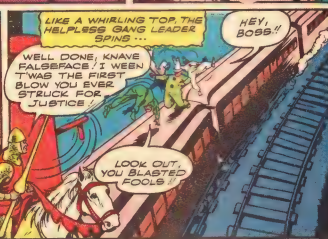
I DUNNO-- BUT WHAT A PUNCH! I HEAR BELLS RINGING!!

FOR ST. GEORGE AND MERRY ENGLAND... 'WARE VARLETS!!

HEY, YOU GUYS, TAKE A LOOK! I'M SEEIN' THEM THINGS AGAIN!

THE SHINING KNIGHT!!-- AND THAT FLYING NAG, VICTORY!!





BROKEN BY THE RAZZLE -
DAZZLE ASSAULT OF THE
MAN FROM YESTERDAY, THE
CLOWNS SLINK OFF LIKE
JACKALS...

LIKE A GREAT, SOARING BIRD
OF PREY, THE SHINING KNIGHT
MOUNTS HIGH OVER NEW
ORLEANS TO FOLLOW THE
FLEEING FELONS WITH
HIS KEEN EYES...

BUT, BELOW JUSTIN ARE
HORDES OF BRILLIANT
COSTUMES, EACH VIVID
SPASH OF COLOR A
DECOY...

BACK TO THE
HIDEOUT--
QUICK!! NEVER
MIND THE
LOOT!

WHAT LOOT?
I COLLECTED
NOTHING BUT
BLACK EYES
THIS TRIP!

UP, VICTORY, UP
HIGHER! BY
MY FAITH, IT
SHOULD BE
EASY TO
FOLLOW
THOSE
SCOUNDRELS
IN THEIR
WHITE
SUITS!

GADZOOKS! WHAT IS THIS
MADNESS?--THIS PAGEANT
--THERE ARE HUNDREDS
OF THE SAME WHITE
SUITS!

..AND WHAT DO I SEE?
BY ST. GEORGE AND THE
S'ALWART KNIGHTS OF
THE TABLE...IT CANNOT
BE TRUE!

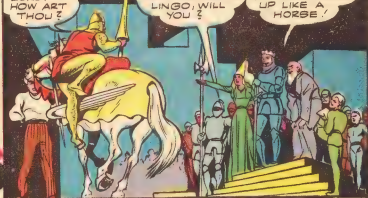


Like A PLUMMETING WHITE HAWK, THE SHINING
KNIGHT SWOOPS INTO THE VERY HEART OF THE CARNIVAL.

MY LIEGE
LORD!
HOW ART
THOU?

GET A LOAD
OF THIS GUY'S
LINGO, WILL
YOU?

..AND HE'S GOT
A PLANE MADE
UP LIKE A
HORSE!



MY LORD, KING ARTHUR
AND QUEEN GUINEVERE...
AND MERLIN...I GIVE YOU
GREETING! HOW NOW,
MERLIN, HAS YOUR WISDOM
DEvised A MACHINE
FOR FOLLOWING ME
THROUGH THE
AGES?



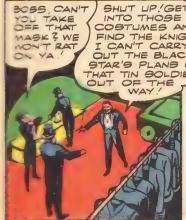
THIS GUY'S
WHACKED
UP TO THE
EARS! C'MON,
TOOTIE,
LET'S GO
AND GET IN
A LITTLE RUG-
CUTTIN'!

Y'KNOW,
HARRY...I
THINK HE
TALKS
REAL
PRETTY...
LIKE IN
A MOVIE!

WHAT A
FOOL AM
I! THIS
IS SIMPLY
MORE OF
THE
CARNIVAL
MADNESS!



MEANWHILE, FALSEFACE
RAGES IN HIS HIDEOUT...



BOSS, CAN'T
YOU TAKE
OFF THAT
MASK? WE
WONT RAT
ON YA!

SHUT UP! GET
INTO THOSE
COSTUMES AND
FIND THE KNIGHT!
I CAN'T CARRY
OUT THE BLACK
STAR'S PLANS UNTIL
THAT TIN SOLDIER IS
OUT OF THE
WAY!

ONE HOUR LATER, JUSTIN IS
STOPPED BY MARDI GRAS
"OFFICIALS"...

GENTLEMEN,
I BELIEVE
THIS IS
THE ONE,
ISN'T
IT?

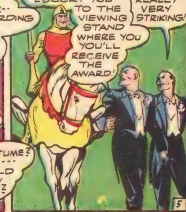
YES, MISTER...
WE'RE AWARding
YOU FIRST
PRIZE FOR
THE BEST
COSTUME!



PRIZE? COSTUME?
GADZOOKS...
WHAT WOULD
MERLIN SAY
TO THAT?

IF YOU WILL JUST
STEP THIS WAY,
SIR...WE'LL
ESCORT YOU
TO THE
VIEWING
STAND
WHERE YOU
YOU'LL
RECEIVE
THE
AWARD!

A MOST
EFFECTIVE
COSTUME...
REALLY
VERY
STRIKING!



GRAFTY HANDS TOUCH A HIDDEN SPRING AND THE KNIGHT PLUNGES HEADLONG INTO FALSEFACE'S TRAP!!



WON'T YOU DROP IN AND PAY US A VISIT, FAIR KNIGHT??

GREAT GAG, CHARLIE... I ALMOST FELL INTO IT MYSELF!

SWOUNDS!! WHAT'S THIS??

LIKE OCTOPUS TENTACLES, STEEL WIRE LASHES A CLINGING NET AROUND JUSTIN...

AM-H... THE FLY HAS WALKED INTO OUR PARLOR... GREETINGS, TIN HORN!!

WHAT A SENSE OF HUMOR! BOSS, YOU KILL ME!!

CUT THE COMEDY!! WHEN DO WE KILL HIM??



WITH ARMS BOUND CLOSE TO HIS SIDE BY THE SILK-LIKE THREADS OF STEEL, JUSTIN IS POWERLESS TO UNGHEATH HIS SWORD...

TAKE A LAST LOOK AROUND YOU, KNIGHT! WE'RE PREPARING YOU FOR A MUSEUM!

COWARDS!! BASE VARLETS!! LOOSE ME BUT ONE MOMENT AND I'LL MAKE CROW BAIT OF YOU ALL!!

YES, WHAT IS IT?

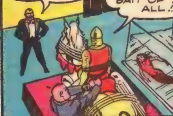
BOSS, THE BREAK WE BEEN WAITIN' FOR HAS COME... LOOK WHAT IT SAYS HERE IN THE PAPER!

LIKE A MUMMY'S COAT, LIME THAT TURNS LIVING FLESH INTO STONE IS PLASTERED OVER JUSTIN...

CAREFUL WITH THAT STUFF!

IN A FEW HOURS, KNIGHT... YOU'LL BE JUST ANOTHER IRON SHELL, LIKE THAT DUMMY MERMAID IN THE TANK!

OKAY, BOSS, WE'RE ALL SET TO GO!



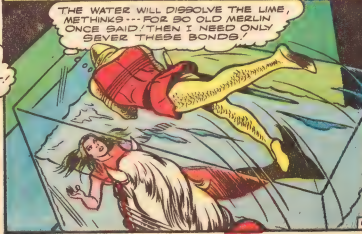
--WITH THE CHEMICAL HARDENING HIS LIVING BODY TO A STONE STATUE, THE KNIGHT THINKS DESPERATELY--

BY ALL MY FAITH IN GOOD AND JUSTICE-- THERE MUST BE A WAY OUT. DID I NOT NOTICE A TANK OF WATER JUST BELOW THIS PEDESTAL?



LOWLY SHIFTING HIS WEIGHT IN THE SADDLE, THE KNIGHT AT LAST PLUMMETS INTO THE WATER-FILLED TANK...

THE WATER WILL DISSOLVE THE LIME, METHINKS... FOR SO OLD MERLIN ONCE SAID! THEN I NEED ONLY SEVER THESE BONDS!



RACING DESPERATELY AGAINST TIME, JUSTIN SAWS HIS BOUND WRISTS AGAINST THE TOOTH-LIKE, IRON SCALES OF THE MERMAID'S TAIL---

ONE MORE WRENCH AND I'M FREE... S'WOUNDS, I **MUST** BE FREE TO AID VICTORY!



FREEDOM!! THEN QUICK STROKES WITH THE MAGIC SWORD OF SHARPNESS AND VICTORY IS SAVED!

VICTORY...PATIENCE, COURAGEOUS FRIEND--TOGETHER WE SHALL PAY THEM BACK A THOUSAND-FOLD FOR THAT SCURVY TRICK... NOW WE MUST GLANCE AT THAT NEWSPAPER!



NEWS PRESIDENT ENNIS CALLS MEETING!!

J.J. ENNIS ANNOUNCED THAT A MEETING OF MARDI GRAS OFFICIALS WILL BE HELD AT HIS HOME TONIGHT--

ENNIS SAID THAT HE WOULD TURN OVER HIS FAMOUS STAR SAPPHIRE TO THE POLICE AT THE MEETING, SINCE WAVE PRESENT CRIME DOUBTFUL MADE HIM SAFETY OF THE JEWEL'S HIDING PLACE...

--LIKE A SILVER SPECTRE OF VENGEANCE, THE **SHINING KNIGHT** BURSTS INTO THE HOME OF PRESIDENT ENNIS!

THE SHINING KNIGHT!!

HAIL, FRIEND! BE NOT ALARMED! I BRING SUCCOR TO YOU IN YOUR TIME OF NEED!



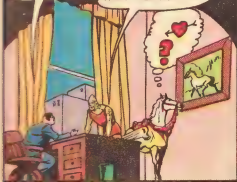
BUT WHAT'S WRONG? WHY DO I NEED ANY-THING?

GADZOOKS, MY FRIEND! THESE SCURVY KNAVES, WHO HAVE PLUNDERED YOUR FAIR CARNIVAL, PLAN TO STRIP YOU OF YOUR JEWEL THIS VERY NIGHT!



STEAL THE STAR SAPPHIRE? WHAT SHALL I DO?

GOOD FRIEND, I HAVE A PLAN TO LAY THESE SCOUNDRELS BY THE HEELS, IF YOU WILL HAVE THE COURAGE TO AID ME! LISTEN---

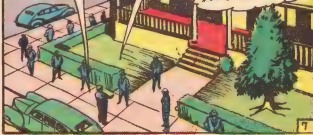


THAT NIGHT A CORDON OF GRIM-FACED "DETECTIVES" FORMS AROUND THE ENNIS MANSION--EXAMINES EACH GUEST THAT ENTERS---

BUT THIS IS PREPOSTEROUS! I'M ONE OF ENNIS' OLDEST AND BEST FRIENDS!

SORRY, SIR! WE HAVE ORDERS FROM THE POLICE COMMISSIONER TO EXAMINE EVERYONE!

HE THINKS I'M A DICK... HA! HA!



GUEST AFTER GUEST IS SUBMITTED TO A HUMILIATING EXAMINATION. THEN...

SORRY, SIR--THE COMMISSIONER INSISTS WE SEARCH EVERYONE ENTERING HERE TONIGHT!

YOU BLASTED FOOL, I'M THE POLICE COMMISSIONER! WHY--I DON'T BELIEVE YOU'RE A DETECTIVE AT ALL!

THAT'S ALL WE WANT TO KNOW, BUDDY! GET YOUR HANDS UP AND GET YOURSELF INSIDE!

ALL SET, BOSS! YOU CAN COME IN WITH THE BOYS NOW--THE BIG SHOTS ARE ALL IN THERE--UNARMED!

MOMENTS LATER, FALSEFACE AND HIS ARMY OF THUGS TAKE OVER ENNIS' HOME...

I WANT THE STAR SAPPHIRE, ENNIS! I KNOW YOU'VE TAKEN IT OUT OF HIDING TONIGHT--BETTER COME ACROSS!

ALL RIGHT! IT'S IN MY CURIO ROOM!



TH--THAT'S IT--THE STAR SAPPHIRE!!

OH, BABY!--JUST LIKE THE BLACK STAR SAID! COME TO PAPA!

BEFORE THE GRASPING FINGERS CAN TOUCH THE PRECIOUS STONE, THE SHINING KNIGHT'S TRAP SPRINGS...

WH--WHAT? THE SHINING KNIGHT? YOU'RE DEAD!

NOT YET, SIR SWINE!

IT'S ALL A PLANT--WE'VE BEEN TAKEN IN!!



THE THUGS ARE TRAPPED WITH THE SAME RUSE THEY USED TO ATTACK THE CITY!

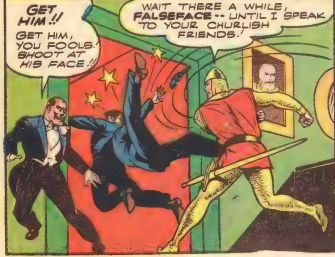
GET HIM!!

GET HIM, YOU FOOLS! SHOOT AT HIS FACE!!

WAIT THERE A WHILE, FALSEFACE--UNTIL I SPEAK TO YOUR CHURLISH FRIENDS!

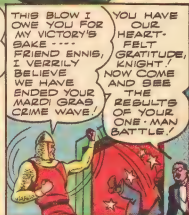
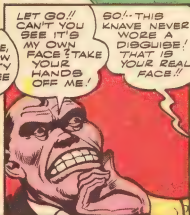
WE GOT HIM TRAPPED, CHARLIE! LET'S HAND IT TO HIM!

MIND IF I GET THIS ONE OUT, ROGUES??





ON 2 CHAINED-LIGHTNING CHARGE, AND THE SHINING KNIGHT CAPTURES FALSE-FACE, WHO SQUIRMS LIKE A FRENZIED RAT!...



...and the CRIMINAL CLOWNS MAKE THEIR LAST APPEARANCE IN COSTUME AS THEY DID THEIR FIRST--IN A STATUARY GROUP...



BUT BEHIND THEM IN THE DESERTED CURIO ROOM A SINISTER, CLOAKED FIGURE GLIDES SILENTLY TOWARD ONE DARK CORNER--



RAG DOLL, OLD, TATTERED, AND WORTHLESS. OF WHAT USE CAN IT BE TO THE BLACK STAR'S SINISTER ENDS ??...



the STAR-SPANGLED KID

By JERRY Siegel
AND
Doc Sherman

ONCE AGAIN PIRATES SAIL THE SEAS, HUNTING DOWN SHIPS, SMALL AND LARGE, TRACKING THEM THROUGH THE LUMINOUS OCEANS AND AT LAST BOARDING THEM WITH PIERCE CRIES AND GLEAMING CUTLASSES IN HAND... ONLY TO BRING TREASURE TO THEIR VICTIMS RATHER THAN ROB THEM! WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THESE RAIDERS WHO HUNT THEIR PREY ONLY TO GIVE? WHO IS THEIR FAT JOLLY CHIEF WHO DELIGHTS IN PRESENTING PRICELESS TREASURES TO ALL AND SUNDRY?...WHAT LIES BEHIND THE -
"MYSTERY OF THE SANTA CLAUS PIRATE!"

THRUSTING HER WHITE PROW THROUGH THE WARM OCEAN WATERS, A LUXURIOUS YACHT IDLES A FEW MILES OFF KEY WEST.

LOOK THERE! IF I DIDN'T THINK I WAS CRAZY, I'D SAY THAT WAS A PIRATE SHIP DRAWING NEAR. DO YOU SEE THE SKULL AND CROSSBONES FLYING FROM HER MAST?

I DO...B-BUT IT MUST BE SOME SORT OF A JOKE THERE JUST AREN'T ANY MORE PIRATES THESE DAYS



LIKE SOME OMINOUS REMINDER OF BLOODY DAYS LONG AGO, CANNON GLEAM AND SWORDS FLASH AS THE BLACK RAIDER CLOSES IN...

AVAST THERE, CUT YOUR SPEED... PREPARE TO RECEIVE OUR CAPTAIN'S BOARDING PARTY!

CAN'T WE PUT UP A FIGHT?

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE... THERE ISN'T A WEAPON ON BOARD! WE NEVER EXPECTED ANYTHING SO FANTASTIC AS THIS!



LIKE GRIM VANDALS, THE SWARTHY PIRATE CREW TAKES POSSESSION...

THIS IS HORRIBLE... THEY LOOK LIKE GHOSTS OF THE PAST!

SILENCE, ALL! OUR CHIEF APPROACHES!



LIKE SOME FANTASTIC FIGURE' OUT OF A FAIRY TALE, THE PIRATE CAPTAIN APPEARS ON DECK.

NOW I KNOW I'M GOING OUT OF MY MIND!

PRECISELY, MY DEAR FRIENDS... I AM THE SANTA CLAUS PIRATE... WITH GIFTS FOR YOU ALL! MATE, BRING THEM MY PRESENTS!

WHY, WHY, IT'S SANTA CLAUS!



WONDER FOLLOWS WONDER AS THE SANTA CLAUS PIRATE'S CREW CARRIES CHESTS OF TREASURE ABOARD THE CAPTURED YACHT...

OH...HOW BEAUTIFUL! I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH LOVELY JEWELS!

AND THEY'RE REAL! WE CAN'T BE GIVING THEM TO US. WHY, THEY'RE WORTH A FORTUNE!



ALL THESE TREASURES ARE FOR YOU TO KEEP, MY FRIENDS. ENJOY THEM AND REMEMBER THAT THEY ARE THE GIFTS OF THE SANTA CLAUS PIRATE!

HE MUST BE SOME WHACKY MILLIONAIRE!



GROWLING LIKE GULLEN DOGS, THE CREW OF THE PIRATE SHIP TURNS MUTINOUS WHEN THEY ARE OUT OF SIGHT...

WHAT'S THE IDEA, CAPTAIN... GIVING AWAY ALL THAT DOUGH AND STUFF? WHY DO WE HAVE TO DRESS UP LIKE THIS?

I THOUGHT YOU SAID WE WAS OUT TO MAKE DOUGH... NOT GIVE IT AWAY!

QUIET, YOU FOOLS!



YOU DUMB MUGGS WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND. I TOLD YOU WE'D MAKE MILLIONS... AND WE WILL! I'VE GOT A PLAN IN MIND! NOW SHUT UP AND GET BACK TO YOUR QUARTERS. CALL ME WHEN YOU SIGHT ANOTHER SHIP WE'LL PUT THE SAME ACT ON AGAIN.



AS THE DAYS PASS, THE SANTA CLAUS PIRATE ROAMS THE OCEAN WIDE, CAPTURING BOATS AND SHOWERING THEM WITH TREASURES...

PLEASE ACCEPT THESE POOR PRESENTS FROM THE SANTA CLAUS PIRATE!

I'VE HEARD ABOUT THIS ECCENTRIC, BUT I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE LUCKY ENOUGH TO MEET HIM!



KEY WEST, WHERE THE PEMBERTON YACHT IS BEGINNING ITS SOUTHERN CRUISE...

SINCE YOU'RE THE HEAD OF THE MARINE LABORATORIES HERE, DR. YATES, I WANTED TO HAVE A SHORT TALK WITH YOU BEFORE I BEGAN MY RESEARCH ON OCEANIC PLANKTON.

THE ENTIRE SCIENTIFIC WORLD IS EAGERLY AWAITING YOUR DISCOVERIES, PEMBERTON. I HOPE YOU WILL VISIT ME AGAIN AT THE LABORATORY WHEN YOU RETURN.

WHAT IS THIS RUMOR I'VE BEEN HEARING ABOUT THE SANTA CLAUS PIRATE? IS HE DANGEROUS?

I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE THE STORY MYSELF. IF IT'S TRUE, HE'LL PROBABLY TURN OUT TO BE A GENEROUS MILLIONAIRE WITH A PRANKISH SENSE OF HUMOR.

THE PEMBERTON YACHT TURNS SOUTH AND CRUISES DEEP INTO THE PEACEFUL, BLUE CARIBBEAN...

HEY... THAT LOOKS LIKE THE SANTA CLAUS PIRATE ON HIS WAY OVER HERE.

IF YOU ARE NOT QUIETER, DUGAN, I SHALL HAVE YOU SENT HOME AT ONCE! YOU KNOW HOW SHATTERED MY NERVES HAVE BEEN EVER SINCE THAT DREADFUL BANK ROBBERY!

UNDER THE TROPIC MOON, THE GHOSTLIKE PIRATE SHIP ATTACKS THE YACHT...

SUCH BEAUTIFUL GEMS! NO WONDER EVERY SHIP IN THE OCEAN IS ANXIOUS TO BE ATTACKED BY THE SANTA CLAUS PIRATE!

DAT, I THINK WE'D BETTER PULL A SWITCHEROO! THIS LOOKS LIKE A JOB FOR THE STAR-SPANGLED KID!

AND STRIPESY!

WE'LL HAVE TO BOARD THAT PIRATE SHIP BY MUSCLE POWER! IF WE TOOK THE STAR-ROCKET RACER OUT AT NIGHT, DAD WOULD GET SUSPICIOUS.

MUSCLE POWER IT IS, KID. AND A PLEASURE! I'VE BEEN GETTING KIND OF FED UP WITH THEM NERVES OF YOURS. COULDN'T KEEP A STRAIGHT FACE ANYMORE!

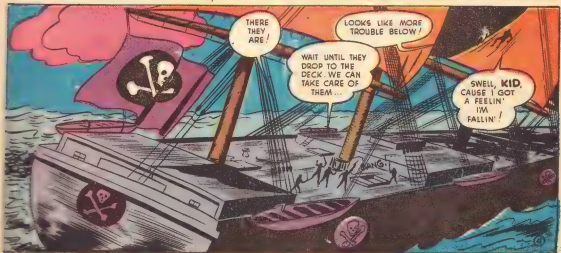
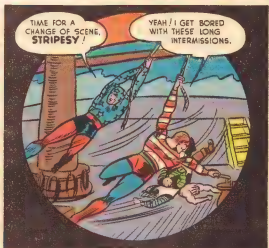
SHE'S DRIFTING AWAY! THINK WE CAN SWIM FAST ENOUGH TO OVERTAKE HER?

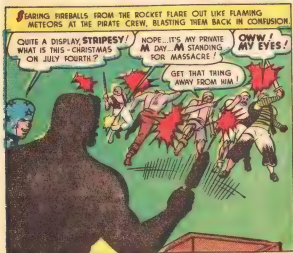
WE WON'T HAVE TO, KID. JUST GIVE ME ONE CAST AT THAT BIG BLOW-FISH... THAT'S ALL.

LIKE AN ANGRY HORNET, THE WEIGHTED LINE SINGS OUT THROUGH THE NIGHT TO HOOK DEEP INTO THE TIMBERS OF THE VANISHING VESSEL...

MIND IF I BUM A RIDE?

ANYTHING YOU SAY... ONLY NO BACKSEAT DRIVING!







ABOARD THE PIRATE CRAFT, THE SINISTER CAPTAIN BIGG ADDRESSES HIS MEN...

THERE'LL BE NO FINISHING OUR PLANS, M'LADS, UNTIL WE DISPOSE OF THE **KID** AND **STRIPESY**. I'VE GOT A PLAN...HELMSMAN, SET COURSE FOR DERELICT ROCK. WHEN THOSE TWO COME LOOKING FOR US TOMORROW, THEY'LL WALK INTO A BIT OF SURPRISE THEY WON'T LIKE!



THE FOLLOWING MORNING...BEFORE THE SUN HAS BARELY LIFTED OVER THE EDGE OF THE PLACID CARIBBEAN...

BUT WHY MUST YOU INSIST ON LEAVING SO EARLY IN THE MORNING, SYLVESTER? I THOUGHT YOU NEEDED REST.

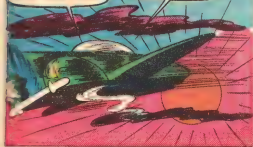
NOW, FATHER, THE OCEANIC PLANKTON CAN BEST BE STUDIED IN THE EARLY MORNING. I INTEND DEVOTING THIS DAY'S WORK TO THE LONGITUDINAL DRIFT OF SEA-WEED...



THE SWIFT PLANE SCUDS LOW ACROSS THE SEA. THEN, OUT OF SIGHT, A TOUCH OF THE CONTROLS EFFECTS A STARTLING TRANSFORMATION...FROM SEA-PLANE TO **STAR-ROCKET RACER**!

THE OLD SWITCHEROO STILL WORKS SMOOTH, EH, **STRIPESY**? WELL, LET'S SCOUT AROUND FOR CAPTAIN BIGG, THE SANTA CLAUS PIRATE!

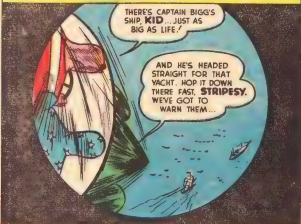
BOYOHBOYOHBOY! SURE FEELS GOOD TO GET BACK INTO HARNESS AGAIN. THAT VACATION WAS JUST ABOUT WEARING ME OUT, **KID**!



A BLACK DOT CHURNS THE CHOPPY SURFACE OF THE SEA INTO A FOAMING WAKE...

THERE'S CAPTAIN BIGG'S SHIP, **KID**...JUST AS BIG AS LIFE!

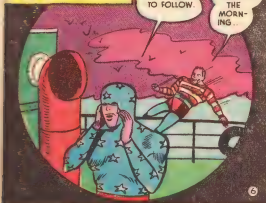
AND HE'S HEADED STRAIGHT FOR THAT YACHT. HOP IT DOWN THERE FAST, **STRIPESY**. WE'VE GOT TO WARN THEM...



BOOMING DOWN WITH SILENT SPEED, THE **STAR-ROCKET RACER** SKIMS THE WATER TO A SMOOTH STOP ALONGSIDE THE PIRATE CRAFT...

HELLO, FOLKS... ANYBODY HOME? YOU'VE GOT VISITORS WITH MORE TO FOLLOW.

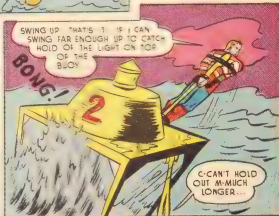
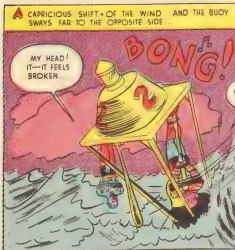
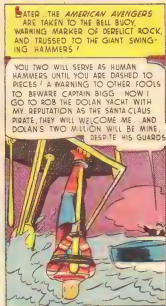
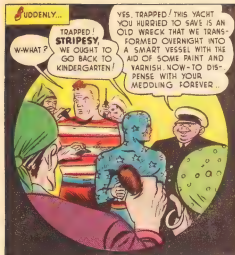
MAYBE THEY DON'T LIKE TO GET UP SO EARLY IN THE MORNING...

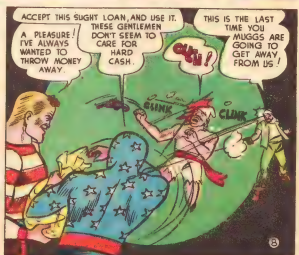
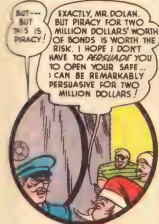
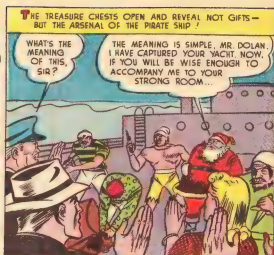


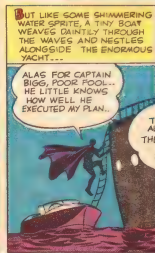
LOOK, **KID**, FRESH PAINT. ALL OVER US...

FRESH PAINT!? WHO EVER HEARD OF ANYONE PAINTING HIS BOAT OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OCEAN? I WONDER...?









A STAR-SPANGLED KID adventure every month in STAR-SPANGLED COMICS

THE GREEN ARROW

3
SHOTS
10¢

THIRD PAWN OF THE
BLACK STAR...THE HOPPER
INVADES A PLAYGROUND
OF PLEASURE TO CONDUCT
HIS CRAFTY CAMPAIGN OF
CRIME. WHERE CROOKS
TURN GENEROUS AND
FORCE THEIR GIFTS OF
PRIZES AND MONEY ON
UNWARY PLEASURE-
SEEKERS... WHERE
THOUSANDS ARE THROWN
AWAY IN THE SEARCH OF
A PINCH-PENNY PREY...
THERE THE GREEN ARROW
AND SPEEDY FIND DANGER
AND LAUGHTER IN THE...
"MYSTERY OF THE ONE-
MAN MUSEUM!"

MADEST SPECTACLE OF THE
CAREFREE CITY IS A GAME
WHERE THE PATRONS CANNOT
LOSE!

HERE Y'ARE,
SIR! A GREAT
BIG PRIZE
TO TAKE
HOME TO THE
LITTLE LADY!

BUT I MISSED.
I DIDN'T HIT
ANYTHING!

JUST SIGN YOUR
NAME AND ADDRESS
HERE, SIR, AND YOU
GET YOUR PRIZE!

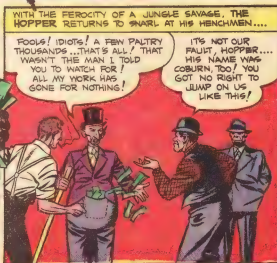
BEAT
IT, YOU!
NO BUNGS
ALLOWED!

I'M NOT
A BUM!
I COULD
PAY TEN
CENTS IF I
FELT LIKE
IT!

PLEASURE CITY!
GLITTERING, GLAMOROUS
MECCA OF MERRYMAKERS...
AMUSEMENT CENTER
OF THE WORLD!

YOU CAN'T
LOSE!
...
TEN CENTS
3 SHOTS!

BY
GEO. PIP



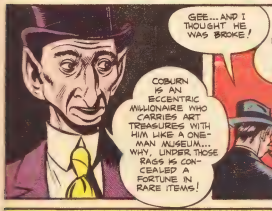
A FLYING KANGAROO LEAP, AND THE HOPPER GIVES
VENT TO HIS BLACK FURY!



YOU SHOULD
HAVE KEPT
YOUR MOUTH
SHUT,
LESTY!

SO YOU DON'T LIKE
TO BE JUMPED ON,
MY FRIEND? WELL
GET THIS THROUGH
YOUR HEAD....
I'M BOSS
HERE!

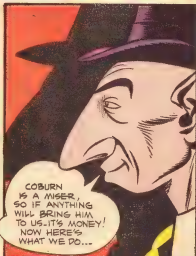
OH!



GEE...AND I
THOUGHT HE
WAS BROKE!

COBURN
IS AN
ECCENTRIC
MILLIONAIRE WHO
CARRIES ART
TREASURES WITH
HIM LIKE A ONE-
MAN MUSEUM...
WHY, UNDER THOSE
RAGS IS CON-
CEALED A
FORTUNE IN
RARE ITEMS!

WE'VE GOT
TO GET HOLD
OF COBURN
BECAUSE HE
ALSO HAS
ADDITIONAL
TREASURE HIDDEN
IN A SECRET
HIDEOUT. NOBODY
KNOWS WHERE
HE LIVES.....
BUT WE'LL FIND
OUT!



COBURN
IS A MISER,
SO IF ANYTHING
WILL BRING HIM
TO US, IT'S MONEY!
NOW HERE'S
WHAT WE DO...

NEXT DAY... MORE MADNESS GREET'S THE AMAZED
TREASURE SEEKERS WHO CROWD THE CARNIVAL.....



HERE Y'ARE,
FOLKS! STEP
RIGHT UP! TEN
DOLLARS IF YOU
MISS THREE
TIMES! STEP
UP....!

SOMEBODY'S
CRAZY AROUND
HERE, SPEEDY.
AND IT'S NOT
US!

LET'S LOOK
INTO THIS....
I'M GETTING
A LITTLE TIRED
OF HOOFING IT
AFTER THE HOPPER.

LET'S
HAVE
THREE
BALLS!

TAKE A
WALK, WILL
YA, BUDDY?
G'WAN BACK
AN' WORK YER
OWN SHOW!
THIS IS ONLY
FOR REAL
CUSTOMERS!

ER...PARDON
ME... COULD
I TRY MY
HAND AT
THIS GAME?

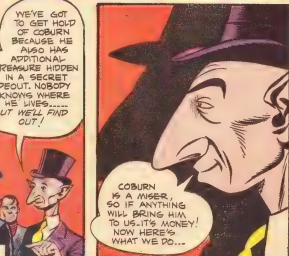
YOU
BET,
MISTER!



WE COULDN'T HELP IT, BOSS.
WE GOT ALL MIXED UP!
THERE WAS A LITTLE
TRAMP WITH WHISKERS
HANGING AROUND.
WE WAS BUSY
GETTIN' RID OF
HIM!

TRAMP 2 WHISKERS?
YOU STUPID FOOL!
THAT TRAMP
WAS
COBURN!

COBURN!
CHEE!





YES, SIR, MISTER COBURN, YOU MISSED AND WON THE PRIZE! JUST STEP RIGHT BACK HERE WITH ME AND YOU'LL GET YOUR TEN DOLLARS!

BUT I ONLY THREW ONCE...



THAT'S ALL RIGHT, SIR! YOU'VE WON FAIR AND SQUARE!

THIS LOOKS PHONEY, SPEEDY! EVERYONE ELSE HAD TO THROW THREE BALLS! AND WHY ARE THEY SO ANXIOUS TO GET THIS COBURN FELLOW INTO THE BACK ROOM?

LET'S FIND OUT!



TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME! YOU'RE ALL CROOKS! YOU'RE ALL AFTER MY MONEY... EVERYONE IS!

LET ME TALK TO HIM WITH THIS, BOSS!

YOU'D BETTER TELL US WHERE YOUR HIDEOUT IS, COBURN!

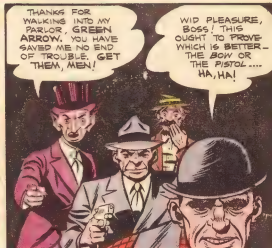


SUDDENLY.... THE STREAK OF A SPEEDING ARROW!

OW-YW... THE GREEN ARROW!

AND SPEEDY... HIS SIDEKICK!

GREETINGS, HOPPER!



THANKS FOR WALKING INTO MY PARLOR, GREEN ARROW. YOU HAVE SAVED ME NO END OF TROUBLE. GET THEM, MEN!

WID PLEASURE, BOSS! THIS OUGHT TO PROVE WHICH IS BETTER-- THE BOW OR THE PISTOL.... HA, HA!



HOW'S THIS FOR PROOF?

YOU BOYS NEED A LITTLE TRIP!

THE GREEN ARROW AND SPEEDY MOVE WITH THE SPEED OF LIGHT, AND TWO SHAFTS THUD AT THE FEET OF THE ONRUSHING THUGS!



CLUMSY FOOLS... I'LL HAVE TO ATTEND TO THIS MYSELF!



WITH A RUSHING ROAR, THE ROLLER COASTER SPEEDS ON ITS COURSE!

LOOK, MR. COBURN, YOU CAN TRUST US..... WHAT'VE YOU GOT THAT THE HOPPER IS AFTER?

I'LL SHOW YOU....

LOOK AT THESE BAROQUE PEARLS.... AND I HAVE A CARVED TURQUOISE HERE.... AND A JADE NECKLACE.... AND AN EMERALD!

HOLY MACKEREL!

AND I'VE GOT MORE... THOUSANDS MORE LIKE THESE, HIDDEN AWAY WHERE NO ONE WILL EVER FIND THEM.... BECAUSE I KNOW THE WORLD IS FILLED WITH CROOKS LIKE YOU, WAITING TO STEAL THEM FROM ME!

A SUDDEN LEAP... AND WITH A MADMAN'S STRENGTH, COBURN THRUSTS HIS WOULD-BE RESCUERS SPINNING INTO SPACE...

IF YOU WANT TO HELP ANYBODY, HELP YOURSELVES! GO BACK TO YOUR KANGAROO FRIEND AND TELL HIM HE CAN'T FOOL ME SO EASILY!

CAUGHT US OFF BALANCE!

HEY! WHAT IS THIS?

WITH LIGHTNING SPEED, THE GREEN ARROW SENDS AN ARROW-LINE SINGING THROUGH SPACE...

GRAB HOLD OF MY HEELS, SPEEDY.... WE'LL MAKE THIS A PARTY LINE!

I STILL WANT TO KNOW IF THAT GUY WAS KIDDING!

WELL, AT LEAST, WE GET A SWELL VIEW OF THE PARK FROM HERE...

LOOK... BEHIND THAT TENT.. THE HOPPER HAS CAUGHT UP WITH COBURN!

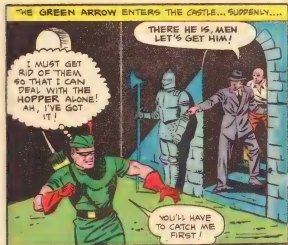
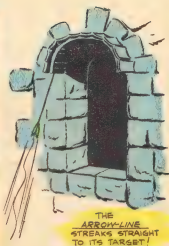
PLEASE... PLEASE DON'T SHOOT! MY HIDEOUT IS IN THE CASTLE OF FEAR!

NOW YOU'RE BEING SENSIBLE! AND WHEN WE GET THERE YOU'D BETTER SHOW US WHERE YOU KEEP YOUR TREASURES... OR ELSE!

THE GREEN ARROW AND SPEEDY SWOOP TO THE GROUND...

THEY WENT INTO 'THE CASTLE OF FEAR' THAT MUST BE COBURN'S HIDEAWAY!

C'MON - I KNOW A SHORTCUT!



IN A FLASH, THE GREEN ARROW STREAKS FROM THE ROOM, SLAMS THE DOOR SHUT AND BARS IT!

THERE... THAT TAKES CARE OF THEM! AND NOW FOR THE HOPPER! BUT WHERE IN THE CASTLE CAN HE BE? I KNOW... IN THE CELLAR BELOW TRYING TO PERSUADE COBURN TO PART WITH HIS SECRET!



YOU HAVE ARRIVED TOO LATE, MY FRIEND! I ALREADY KNOW THE HIDING PLACE OF COBURN'S TREASURES! GIVE ME YOUR BOW OR I'LL BLOW HIS BRAINS OUT!



YOU'VE GOT THE UPPER HAND NOW, HOPPER!

THERE! NOW I WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ARROWS FLYING IN MY DIRECTION! AND JUST TO ADD TO MY REASONS FOR KILLING YOU, I'LL REVEAL THE SPOT WHERE THE TREASURE LIES... IT'S IN THE SUIT OF ARMOR ON THE GROUND FLOOR NEXT TO THE STAIRWAY!



MEANWHILE, SPEEDY, FOLLOWING HIS BUDDY'S INSTRUCTIONS, HAS ENTERED THE CASTLE.

HE'S IN HERE SOMEWHERE... BUT WHERE?



WOW! A TRAPDOOR!



SAY YOUR PRAYERS, GREEN ARROW... MY CONSCIENCE WON'T BOTHER ME NOW... YOU KNOW TOO MUCH!

YOU WITH A CONSCIENCE? THAT'S A LAUGH!



SUDDENLY, THE WALL IN BACK OF THE HOPPER OPENS UP AND OUT FLIES--- SPEEDY!

WHEE--EE--EE! 'M A LANDSLIDE!

NICE TIMING, CHUM... EVEN THOUGH UNINTENTIONAL!



I'LL FIX YOU, YOU BLASTED BRAT!

OH, NO YOU DON'T!



BUT AS THE GREEN ARROW LEAPS FORWARD, THE HOPPER LASHES OUT WITH HIS POWERFUL LEGS!

HA, HA!
YOU FORGET
I AM A MAN
OF MANY
WEAPONS,
GREEN
ARROW!

WITH THE GREEN ARROW IN AN APPARENTLY
TAZED CONDITION,
THE HOPPER
SEEKS TO END
THE ENCOUNTER!

A MOST
INVITING
OPPORTUNITY!

BUT SUDDENLY, THE PRONE
FIGURE SPRINGS INTO ACTION
AND DODGES TO ONE SIDE.

SPEEDY'S FLASHING ARROWS
FINISH THE JOB, PINNING
THE CRIMINAL TO THE TABLE!

THAT CLOSES
THE CAREER
OF THE
HOPPER!

RIGHT! NOW
LET'S FREE
COBURN!

WHAT WITH THE HOPPER AND
HIS GANG ABOUT TO BE
TURNED OVER TO
THE POLICE AND
YOUR GENG SAFE,
SURELY YOU
TRUST US
NOW!

I DON'T
BELIEVE
IT! YOU'RE
ALL THIEVES...
ALL OF YOU!
I'M GOING TO
CHANGE MY HIDING
PLACE AT ONCE!

IS HE
KIDDING?

BUT EVEN AS THEY TALK... OUT OF
THE SHADOWS GLIPS THE SINISTER
FORM OF THE BLACK STAR!

OF ALL OF COBURN'S COSTLY
TREASURES, THE FEARFUL
FINGERS SEIZE ON... A
BROKEN WATCH... WORTH
LESS THAN NOTHING TO
ANY APPEARANCES.

POOR HOPPER...
HE LITTLE KNOWS
HOW WELL HE HAS
SERVED HIS PURPOSE...

AND BEFORE DRIFTING
BACK INTO THE NIGHT...

YOU KNOW, WITH
THREE RAYS, THE
BLACK STAR IS
ALMOST ABLAZE...

The GREEN ARROW hits the mark every month in MORE FUN COMICS



NO...THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH YOUR EYES... YOU'RE NOT SEEING DOUBLE! FOR THIS IS THE CRAZIEST GET-TOGETHER OF ALL TIME... THE CONVENTION OF TWINS! BUT WHEN CRAFTY CROOKS STRIKE IN A SINISTER CRIME CARNIVAL THAT TURNS TWIN BROTHERS AND SISTERS INTO TOTAL STRANGERS, THEN THE **CRIMSON AVENGER** AND WING FIND SOME DOUBLE TROUBLE AWAITING THEM IN "THE CASE OF THE TWISTED TWINS!"

NEAR IN THE NORTH, NESTLED NEAR THE GREAT LAKES, LIES TWIN CITY... A MAJESTIC DOUBLE METROPOLIS, DIVIDED BY A ROARING RIVER....



AND AT THE FAMOUS HOTEL DOUBLE, THE ANNUAL TWIN CONVENTION IS TAKING PLACE!

EYES GO BACK ON ME, MIST' TRAVIS. SEE TWOSOME WHERE SHOULD ONLY BE ONSOME!

YOUR EYES ARE ALL RIGHT, WING. WE'RE JUST STAYING AT THE SAME HOTEL WITH THE TWIN CONVENTION!



OH! ME THOUGHT MAYBE HOT WEATHER WAS MELTING EYES!

THE WEATHER'S GOING TO GET A LOT HOTTER WHEN WE GET HOLD OF THE BRAIN!



WINDMIGHT... AND THE COOLING AIR-CONDITIONER BLOWS IN A DEADLY DRAUGHT OF DANGER!



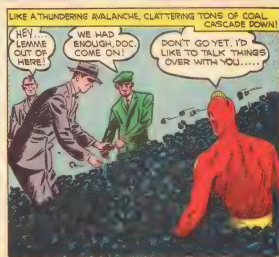
IN A FLASHING INSTANT, CLOTHES ARE TORN AWAY AND THE AVENGER TAKES THE TRAIL!



DEEP IN THE CELLAR OF THE HOTEL, WHERE THE MACHINE PUMPS COOLING AIR TO THE ROOMS!



A CAPSULE BURSTS... A SCARLET CLOUD SWEEPS UP, AND THROUGH IT CHARGE THE CRIMSON AVENGER AND WING!



BEFORE WING AND THE AVENGER CAN FIGHT THROUGH THE BLACK BARRICADE, THE MARAUDERS VANISH!

GONE, WING! I CAN'T FIGURE THIS THING OUT... WAS THE BRAIN BEHIND THIS ATTACK? WHY GAS AN ENTIRE HOTEL TO GET US?

HOLD EVERYTHING! CRIMINAL LEAVE SOUVENIR BEHIND!



SINCE WHEN DOES CROOK CARRY MEDICAL IMPLEMENT INSTEAD OF GUN?

I DON'T KNOW! THEY DIDN'T SEEM TO BE CROOKS. WING, THIS CASE HAS ME STUMPED....



THE FOLLOWING MORNING BRINGS MORE MADNESS... AT THE TOURNAMENT OF TWINS, WHERE A PRIZE IS OFFERED FOR THE MOST PERFECT PAIR....

IS THIS A JOKE? YOU'RE NOT TWING. YOU DON'T EVEN LOOK ALIKE!

W-WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



OVERNIGHT, VICTIMS OF THE MYSTERIOUS MIDNIGHT GAS, ALL TWINS HAVE CEASED TO LOOK ALIKE!



WHO ARE YOU?

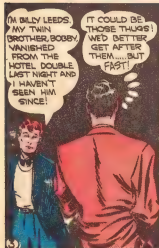
I'M YOUR TWIN SISTER! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO US?

IT MUST HAVE BEEN THAT GAS, WING. IT'S CHANGED THEM!



WHAT'S THE MATTER, FELLA.... DON'T YOU LOOK LIKE YOUR BROTHER ANY MORE?

I D-DON'T KNOW! MY BROTHER'S DISAPPEARED. I CAN'T FIND HIM ANYWHERE



I'M DILLY LEEDE. MY TWIN BROTHER, BOBBY, VANISHED FROM THE HOTEL DOUBLE LAST NIGHT AND I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE!

IT COULD BE THOSE THUGS! WE'D BETTER GET AFTER THEM.... BUT FAST!

INTO UNIFORM AGAIN, AND STREAKING THROUGH THE STREETS, THE CRIMSON AVENGER STARTS ON THE TRAIL OF THE THUGS!



WHY WE GO HERE? NOBODY SICK IN THE FAMILY!

I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHO DROPPED THIS SCALPEL YOU PICKED UP LAST NIGHT.... IT'S THE ONLY CLUE WE HAVE!

BUT THE TWISTING TANGLE OF CLUES LEADS DEEPER INTO CONFUSION.....

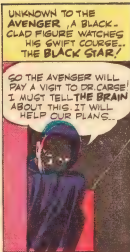


THAT'S A PERCUSSION SCALPEL, A VERY RARE INSTRUMENT. I'VE ONLY MADE ONE IN THE PAST TEN YEARS.... FOR DR. CARSE, IN THE TWIN TOWER BUILDING!



BUT DR. CARSE IS THE GREATEST SURGEON OF TWIN CITY. HE WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING ILLEGAL!

JUST THE SAME, WE'RE GOING TO PAY HIM A VISIT... TO RETURN SOMETHING HE LOST LAST NIGHT!



UNKNOWN TO THE AVENGER, A BLACK-CLAD FIGURE WATCHES HIS SWIFT COURSE... THE BLACK STAR!

SO THE AVENGER WILL PAY A VISIT TO DR. CARSE! I MUST TELL THE BRAIN ABOUT THIS. IT WILL HELP OUR PLANS...



PERCHED ON THE PINNACLE OF TWIN TOWERS IS THE LOFTY PENTHOUSE OFFICE OF DR. CARSE WHERE, AT THE MOMENT, A TELEVISION CONFERENCE IS TAKING PLACE!

IT JUST COULDN'T BE HELPED MR. BANDLER!

WHILE YOU WERE WASTING TIME FIGHTING THE AVENGER, THE BRAIN STOLE THE BOY FROM UNDER YOUR NOSE!



I CAN BREAK YOU ANYTIME I CHOOSE, AND YOU KNOW IT, CARSE..... MY LIFE DEPENDS ON THAT BOY, SO YOU'D BETTER LOCATE HIM AT ONCE!

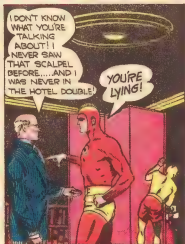
IF THE BRAIN HAS HIM, MR. BANDLER, I'M HELPLESS.....



AS THE AVENGER STORMS IN, DR. CARSE SNAPS OFF THE TELEVISION SET AND ASSUMES THE DIGNITY OF HIS PROFESSION...

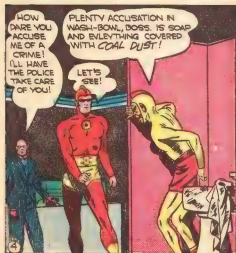
DOCTOR CARSE, I'D LIKE TO KNOW THE MEANING OF THIS INSTRUMENT. YOU DROPPED IT LAST NIGHT AT THE HOTEL DOUBLE!

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS UNWARRANTED INTRUSION?



I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT! I NEVER SAW THAT SCALPEL BEFORE.... AND I WAS NEVER IN THE HOTEL DOUBLE!

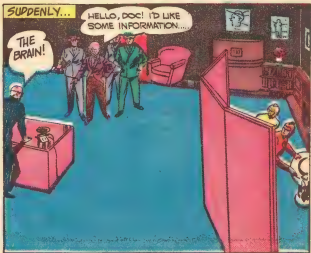
YOU'RE LYING!



HOW DARE YOU ACCUSE ME OF A CRIME! I'LL HAVE THE POLICE TAKE CARE OF YOU!

PLENTY ACCUSATION IN WASH-BOWL, BOSS. IS SOAP AND EVERYTHING COVERED WITH COAL DUST!

LET'S SEE!



SUPPOSEDLY...

HELLO, DOC! I'D LIKE SOME INFORMATION...

THE BRAIN!

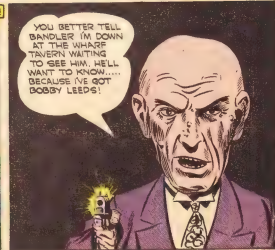
A QUICK FLASH OF THE WRIST, AND THE CRIMSON AVENGER MAKES USE OF ANOTHER GLASS CAPSULE FROM HIS UTILITY BELT!



AND AGAIN... OUT OF HIS SCARLET CLOUD OF GAZE DASHES THE CRIMSON-CLAD CRIME-CRUSHER!



A CRAFTY COLONEL OF CRIME, THE BRAIN ORDERS A QUICK RETREAT!



LIKE SNARLING CURS, THE BRAIN'S HOODS REBEL IN THEIR HASTY FLIGHT TO THE HIDEOUT.....

WHAT'S THE IDEA TELLIN' THE AVENGER WHERE WE HANG OUT, BRAIN?

SHUT UP YOU FOOLS! THE BLACK STAR AND I PLANNED THE WHOLE THING THIS WAY!

YOU RATTIN' ON US?

THE IMPORTANT THING FOR US IS TO LOCATE BANDLER'S SECRET SANITARIUM..... AND WE'LL USE THE BOY AND THE AVENGER TO DO THIS..... NOW LISTEN, HERE'S THE PLAN.....

WE'RE LISTENIN', BOSS. IF THE BLACK STAR AND THE BRAIN FIGURE IT OUT, IT CAN'T MISS!

MEANWHILE, IN HIS TWIN TOWER OFFICE, DR. CARSE CRUMBLES UNDER THE STRAIN.....

I-I CAN'T STAND IT ANY LONGER, IT'S TRUE.... I WAS AT THE HOTEL LAST NIGHT, BUT I'M NOT A CROOK! BANDLER HAS FORCED ME TO DO THIS.....

YOU'D BETTER TAKE US TO SEE THIS MYSTERIOUS BANDLER MAYBE WE CAN STRAIGHTEN THIS MESS OUT!

DEEP INTO THE GLOOMY BACKSTREETS, CARSE LEADS THE AVENGER TO A MINUTARE HIDDEN HOSPITAL.....

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THAT GAS LAST NIGHT?

IT WAS THE ONLY TEST TO LOCATE THE BOY BANDLER NEEDED. THE GAS ATTACKS THE THYROID AND PITUITARY GLANDS OF NORMAL PEOPLE, CHANGING THEIR APPEARANCE FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS!

WHERE A HALF-CRAZED MAN GRIMLY FIGHTS FOR LIFE IN— AN IRON LUNG!

MR. BANDLER, I'VE BROUGHT THE CRIMSON AVENGER TO HELP YOU!

GREETINGS, AVENGER.... ONCE I WAS STRONGER AS YOU, NOW I AM SUFFERING FROM A WEIRD FORM OF HELIUM POISONING. ALL MY MILLIONS CANNOT HELP.....

BUT WHY HAVE YOU FORCED CARSE TO DO ALL THIS?

I NEED A TRANSFUSION OF SPECIAL BLOOD. RESEARCH HAS LOCATED ONLY ONE PERSON WITH THAT KIND OF BLOOD, ONE OF A PAIR OF TWINS. THAT GAS LAST NIGHT WAS A TEST TO IDENTIFY HIM... THE EFFECTS WILL PASS OFF!

THE DREAD OF DEATH HANGE HWANY OVER BANDLER'S WORDS!

IT WAS NOT RIGHT TO USE ILLEGAL METHODS!

DEATH CARES NOTHING FOR THE LAW. NOT ONLY AM I FIGHTING FOR LIFE, BUT I'M FIGHTING THE BRAIN AS WELL. HE STOLE THAT BOY FROM CARSE WHEN WE ALMOST HAD HIM!

WILL YOU HELP ME?

I'LL HELP THE BOY, BANDLER, BUT I WON'T LET YOU FORCE HIM INTO ANYTHING. THE DECISION MUST BE LEFT TO HIS OWN FREE WILL!

LIKE A BAT'S NEST, THE BRAIN'S HIDEOUT SITS ON THE BANK OF THE RIVER KNIFING BETWEEN THE TWIN CITIES!



BURSTING THROUGH HIS SCARLET CLOUD, THE AVENGER CHARGES, LIKE A JUGGERNAUT OF JUSTICE!



HERE'RE A COUPLE OF PUNCHES YOU CROOKS FORGOT TO TAKE WITH YOU THE LAST TIME WE MET!



AS SWIFTLY AS THEY STRUCK, THE AVENGER AND WING ESCAPE WITH THEIR PRIZE.....



BUT THE BRAIN'S THINGS ARE NOT UNCONSCIOUS! GRINNING LIKE GARGOYLES, THEY LEAD TO THEIR FEET!

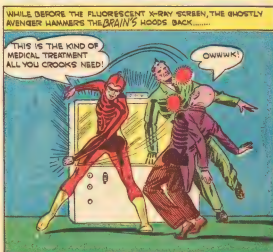
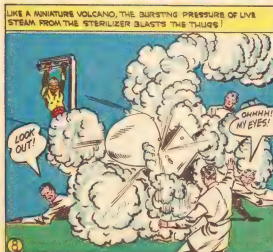
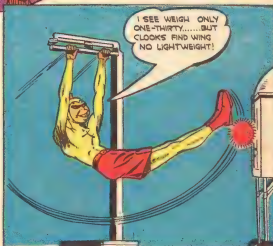
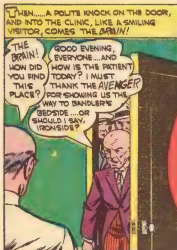


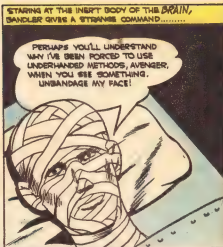
BEARING THEIR BURDEN, THE AVENGER AND WING STREAK TO THE HOME OF THE MAN IN THE IRON LUNG!



UNSCRUPULOUS IN HIS DESPERATE DUEL WITH DEATH... BANDLER BETRAYS THE AVENGER!







WITH TREMBLING FINGERS THE AVENGER REMOVES THE YARDS OF COTTON GAUZE AND REVEALS...



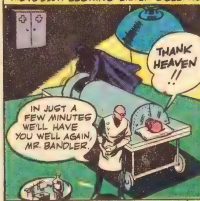
LIKE AN ANGEL OF MERCY, BOBBY LEEDS OFFERS HIS HELP TO THE DYING MAN...



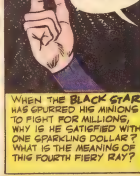
BUT AS THE AVENGER HERDS THE BROKEN THUGS OUT, AND THE MEDICAL PREPARATIONS BEGIN, A FIGURE ENTERS THE ROOM....
THE BLACK STAR!



UNNOTICED, THE BLACK STAR SLIPS TO THE IRON LUNG AND REMOVES... A GLOWING SILVER DOLLAR..



THE FOURTH RAY AT LAST! NOW, IN TRUTH, WILL THE BLACK STAR SHINE!



WHEN THE BLACK STAR HAS SPURRED HIS MINIONS TO FIGHT FOR MILLIONS, WHY IS HE SATISFIED WITH ONE SPARKLING DOLLAR? WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS FOURTH FIERY RAY?

The CRIMSON AVENGER appears every month in DETECTIVE COMICS

VIGILANTE

By
PORT
MORDEN



HERE IS THE PALACE OF PERPETUAL PLAY, WHERE MEN WHO HAVE WORKED ALL THEIR LIVES CAN RETIRE AND LEARN HOW TO BE CHILDREN! BUT WHEN THE DEVIL OF DESTRUCTION—**RATTLE**, DEADLY PENETRATES THEIR PLAY—THE GROUND TO PLAY A GAME OF GRAFT, THE **VIGILANTE** FINDS A FANTASTIC FROLIC WITH FATE IN—**"THE SIXTY KIDNIE CLUB."**



BUT

FIRST—
LET US FOLLOW TWO SHADY FIGURES AS THEY STALK THROUGH DARKENED STREETS OF THE BIG CITY—

HE WENT INTO THAT HOUSE DOWN THE BLOCK THIS LOOKS LIKE THE END OF THE TRAIL!



SILENTLY, THE TWO FAMILIAR FIGURES ENTER A RAMSHACKLE OLD HOUSE...



SUDDENLY!

AAAAAAH

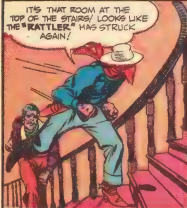
TROUBLE, POP!
UPSTAIRS!

TIME FOR
ACTION!
OH, BOY!



THEY RACE UP THE CREEPING STAIRS---

IT'S THAT ROOM AT THE
TOP OF THE STAIRS! LOOKS LIKE
THE "RATTLER" HAS STRUCK
... AGAIN!



--LUNGE AT THE DOOR---

CRASH

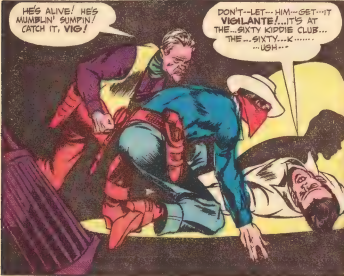


--AND ARE GREETED BY---

A DEAD MAN! JUMPIN' CACTUS!
ANOTHER ONE!



HE'S ALIVE! HE'S
MUMBLIN' SUMPIN!
CATCH IT, VIG!



DON'T--LET--HIM--GET--IT
VIGILANTE!...IT'S AT
THE...SIXTY KIDDE CLUB...
THE...SIXTY...K.....
...UGH--

IT? ...THE
SIXTY KIDDE CLUB?
WHAT GOES ON HERE!

HE'S
DEAD!



...A FEW DAYS LATER...

...AND THIS SIXTY KIDDE CLUB IS RUN BY AN OLD FRIEND OF MY FATHER!

I SEE! YOU FIGURE THAT THE "RATTLER" IS THERE IN DISGUISE! THEN ALL I CAN DO IS REGISTER THERE AND KEEP A SHARP LOOKOUT! SIXTY KIDDE CLUB, HUH? AN' RIGHT IN THE HEART OF THE DESERT! SOUNDS CRAZY!

SHORTLY...

"GOOD THING THAT SNEAKIN' SNAKE HAD ONLY AN HOUR'S START ON US!

YOU BET! OH! OH! THERE IT IS DOWN THE ROAD! -HAGN'T CHANGED A BIT EITHER! -I'LL DROP YOU OFF HERE!



INSIDE THE COOL ROOMS OF THE KIDDE CLUB, BILLY QUESTIONS THE CLERK...

YOU SAY THAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A FRIEND? WELL, THREE NEWCOMERS ARRIVED ABOUT AN HOUR AGO, MR. GUNN!

MR. XAVIER, OVER THERE, PLAYING WITH THE TRAINS CAME IN THE MORNINGS!

CHOO! CHOO! HERE COMES THE LIMITED!

AN! SOMEONE STOLE ONE OF MY TOY SOLDIERS!

MR. VALE, THE MAN WITH THE TOY SOLDIERS AND...

-THE ONE READING, MR. ZINCH, BOTH ARRIVED SHORTLY AFTER.

OOOH! THE WOLF GOT HER!

HM-MM! ONE OF THESE CUCKOOS IS THE "RATTLER," BUT WHICH?

I WONDER WHO THAT LETTER IS FOR? ... CAN'T MAKE OUT THE NAME ON IT!

THAT NIGHT, UNDER THE WESTERN SKY...

CHEE! I WISH I WAS BACK ON BROADWAY!

QUIET! ... NOW, LISTEN... YOU BOYS DRESS UP AS INDIANS, COME TO THE HOUSE AND PRETEND TO BE MEMBERS PLAYING... THEN SET FIRE TO THE CLUB-HOUSE! THAT'LL FORCE OLD WILKINS TO SHOW US WHERE HE'S HIDDEN - BT

ELSEWHERE, A SHORT WHILE LATER...

IS THAT YOU, VIG?

--FIND OUT ANYTHING, BILLY?



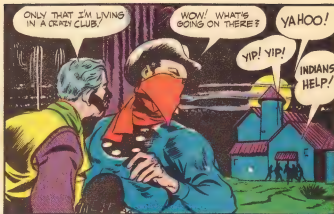
ONLY THAT I'M LIVING IN A CRAZY CLUB!

WON! WHAT'S GOING ON THERE?

YAHOO!

YIP! YIP!

INDIANS. HELP!



DON'T LET IT BOTHER YOU, VIG! THEY'RE JUST SOME OF THE "KIDDIES" PLAYIN' GAMES!

IF THAT'S PLAYIN', THEN THE KIDDIE CLUB HOUSES A BUNCH OF PYROMANIACS! THEY'RE GETTIN' FIRE TO THE PLACE!

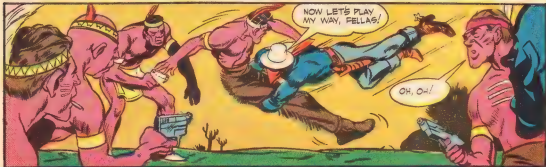


THE VIGILANTE!



NOW LET'S PLAY MY WAY, FELLAS!

OH, OH!



THAT'S THE IDEA! SIMPLE, ISN'T IT? NOW, WHO'S NEXT?

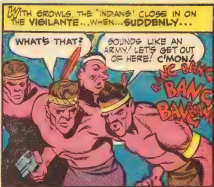
OW!



WITH GROWLS, THE "INDIANS" CLOSE IN ON THE VIGILANTE...WHEN...SUDDENLY...

WHAT'S THAT?

SOUNDS LIKE AN ARMY! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE! C'MON!



AS THE INDIANS RACE OFF...BILLY GUNN APPEARS...

SO...YOU'RE
THE
ARMY!

WELL...HA! HA!...
I'LL DO 'TILL A
BETTER ONE
COMES
ALONG!

...GOOD THING
I RENTED THIS
GAS EATIN' BRONCHO
WHILE I WAS IN
TOWN! HOP ON,
POP! WE'RE GON'
COYOTE-HUNTIN'!

WHAT ABOUT
THE FIRE, VIG?
THE KIDDE CLUB WILL
BURN DOWN!

OH, THAT'S YES, THERE'S
AN AUTOMATIC SPRINKLING
SYSTEM IN THE TOWER BEHIND
THE MAIN BUILDING--THE FIRE WILL
BE PUT OUT IN
NO TIME!

BEFORE LONG,
THE VIGILANTE
TRACKS THE
INDIANS
TO ...

A TRAILER!

SOME INDIANS! WHAT
KIND OF A TEEPEE IS
THAT?

A STEALTHY STALK...

...THEN...

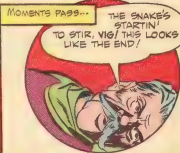
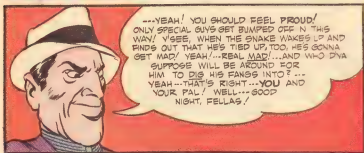
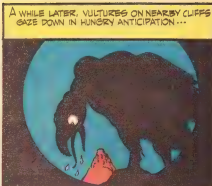
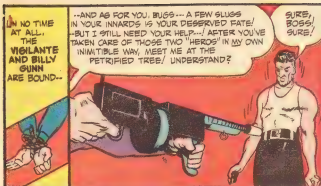
THE VIGILANTE!
HE FOLLOWED
US!

UGH! YOU SASSUM
RIGHT, YOU WHITE-
LIVERED PHONEY
REDSKINS! NOW,
TALK FAST...WHO
PUT YOU UP TO
THIS?

I'LL TALK! I'LL TALK!
IT WUZ DE RATTLER!
HE FORCED US INTO IT!
YEAH! HONEST! WE DON'T
EVEN KNOW WHAT DE
"RATTLER" IS AFTER.
BUT IT'S SOME-
THIN' ONE OF THOSE
GUYS AT THE KIDDE
CLUB HAS! YEAH...
YEAH...A GUY NAMED
WILKINS...THE
RATTLER IS...

Suddenly...

SHUT UP, BUGS!
...DON'T MOVE, VIGILANTE,
OR I'LL WRITE MY NAME
WITH MACHINE GUN BULLETS
ON YOUR BACK!



WHILE THE SNAKE GETS HIS BEAKINGS, THE WARRIOR YANKS THE STAKE OUT OF THE GROUND AND, BECAUSE THE STAKE TAPERS TO POINT, THE ROPE SLIPS OFF EASILY...

(SP. NOTE)



THEN...

WE'LL BE OUT OF THIS MESS PRONTO, PARTNER!

SAVE YOUR BREATH, POP! ONLY YOUR SPEED CAN SAVE US NOW!



SUDDENLY... THE SNAKE TURNS AND SEES ITS PREDICAMENT...



WITH VENOM DRIPPING FROM ITS FANGS, THE SNAKE TURNS TOWARD THE TWO CRIME CRUSHERS...



AND LUNGES... TOO LATE!

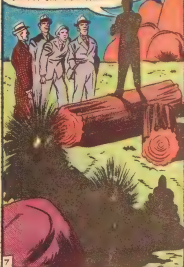
WHEN! THAT WAS CLOSE!

TOO CLOSE! I'M GOING TO HAVE NIGHTMARES ABOUT THIS!



AT THE SECRET MEETING PLACE...

I'VE ALREADY SEARCHED OLD MAN WILKINS' ROOM, BUT IT ISN'T THERE, WHICH LEAVES US BUT ONE RECOURSE...



--AND THAT IS, THE RATTLER METHOD FOR MAKING VICTIMS DIVULGE WHERE THEY'VE HIDDEN-- WHAT THE "RATTLER" IS LOOKING FOR. HEH! HEH! YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN, DON'T YOU, BUSS?



SURE, BOSS! SURE! HEY! WHAT'S THAT?

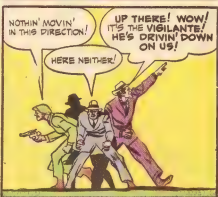
AH-CHOO

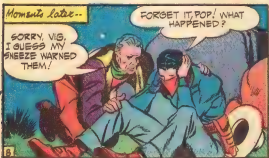
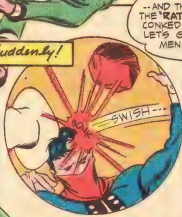


NOTHIN' MOVIN' IN THIS DIRECTION!

UP THERE! WOW! IT'S THE VIGILANTE! HE'S DRIVIN' DOWN ON US!

HERE NEITHER!





MEANWHILE...

WELL, WILKINS, HAVE YOU DECIDED TO TALK?--OR WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLAY SOME MORE--THE "RATTLER"'S WAY?

ENOUGH! ENOUGH! I'LL TELL!...I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU SAY!...IT'S DOWNSTAIRS IN THE...

SUDDENLY...

WH-HH-M...ONLY THE MEN HERE! HE DOES ALL HIS DIRTY WORK BY REMOTE CONTROL!

WOW! THAT MAN'S HERE AGAIN!

CRASH

OOF!
SOFT BAM
POW
BIF
OW!

LATER... AFTER THE "RATTLER"'S HENCHMEN HAVE BEEN SUBDUED-- THE THREE SUSPECTS ARE MARSHALED BEFORE THE VIGILANTE...

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?

HOLD OUT YOUR HANDS, GENTLEMEN!

WHY...WHY HOW DARE YOU!

THREE PAIRS OF HANDS ARE EXTENDED...

WHAT? HOW--?

GREETINGS, "RATTLER!"

SOON...

THAT TAKES CARE OF THE "RATTLER" AND HIS RATS!...BUT HOW DID HIS HANDS GIVE HIM AWAY?

SIMPLE, BILLY! THAT STONE HE HIT ME WITH WAS DESERT ROCK THAT STAINS THE HANDS RED. IT DOESN'T WASH OFF FOR DAYS...

BUT WHAT WAS THE "RATTLER" AFTER? AND WHY WERE TWO MEN KILLED BACK IN THE CITY...

PERHAPS MR WILKINS CAN CLEAR THAT UP FOR US.

THE "RATTLER" WAS SEEKING A RARE STAMP VALUED AT \$100,000 WHICH I POSSESS!

THOSE MEN IN THE CITY WERE MY ASSOCIATES--PART OWNERS OF THE STAMP! THE "RATTLER" PROBABLY FORCED THEM TO DIVULGE WHERE I WAS HIDING, THEN KILLED THEM TO COVER HIS TRAIL. WHEN I LEARNED OF THEIR DEMISE, I PUT THE STAMP IN THIS ENVELOPE AND TACKED IT ON THE BULLETIN BOARD. I FIGURED THAT IT WOULD BE THE LAST PLACE HE'D THINK OF LOOKING FOR IT. AND THANKS TO YOU, VIGILANTE, IT'S IN MY POSSESSION!

LIKE A SPECTRE FROM SPACE, A SABLE-CLAD FIGURE DASHES OUT... THE BLACK STAR!

HEY...

I'LL TAKE THAT, MY FRIEND!

FROM THE ENVELOPE OF WILKINS' TREASURE, THE BLACK STAR SELECTS... A GLOWING KEY!

THE FIFTH AND LAST RAY! THE BLACK STAR WINS!

BEFORE THEIR ASTONISHED EYES, THE BLACK STAR LEAVES... AND VANISHES!

WHAT IN BLAZES WAS THIS ALL ABOUT, WILKINS?

VIGILANTE, THE MOST TERRIBLE THING IN THE WORLD JUST TOOK PLACE! THAT KEY LOOKED HARMLESS-- BUT IT CONTAINED A RARE RADIO-ACTIVE ELEMENT.

Ride high with the VIGILANTE in every issue of ACTION COMICS

AT THE MEETING OF THE SEVEN SOLDIERS, THE VIGILANTE PRODUCES A GUEST WITH A STRANGE STORY....



GENTLEMEN, I WANT YOU TO MEET MR. WILKINS AND LISTEN TO HIS STORY. IT SEEMS OUR WORK HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN.

FIVE PARTNERS IN A CHEMICAL FIRM DISCOVERED A RAY THAT WOULD ENLARGE THE SIZE OF ALL ORGANIC LIFE / THEY DECIDED TO KEEP IT SECRET BECAUSE IT WAS TOO DANGEROUS TO GIVE TO THE WORLD---



EACH PARTNER TOOK ONE OF THE FIVE RADIUM-ELEMENTS THAT COMBINE TO PRODUCE THIS RAY OF BLACK LIGHT, AND HID IT IN A WORTHLESS OBJECT--A RAG DOLL, AN OLD WATCH, A KEY

---- WE SIGNED A PLEDGE OF SECRECY BEFORE ONE WITNESS, A CLERK NAMED MOWGE!



WHY, THAT WAS THE LITTLE SHRIMP WHO CLAIMED THE THUGS FORCED HIM TO DRIVE THEIR CAR!

MOWGE WAS REALLY THE BLACK STAR! HE DUPED FIVE THUGS INTO RUNNING INTERFERENCE FOR HIM BY PULLING OFF CRIMES, WHILE WE WERE FIGHTING THEM, MOWGE GOT WHAT HE WAS REALLY AFTER--THE GLOWING ELEMENTS THAT PRODUCE BLACK LIGHT!



MEANWHILE, MOWGE, THE BLACK STAR, MAKES PERILOUS PREPARATIONS IN HIS HIDDEN LABORATORY



UP TO NOW I'VE BEEN SMALL AND WEAK--SO INSIGNIFICANT THAT I HAD TO USE FAKE MOVIES TO IMPRESS THOSE THUGS AND HAVE THEM CONFUSE MY ENEMIES / THAT WAS THE ONLY WAY I COULD GET TO THE FIVE ELEMENTS!

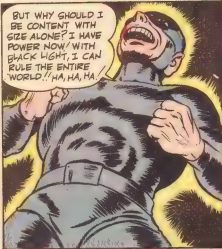


ORDINARY LIGHT, SHINING THROUGH FIVE RARE ELEMENTS, CONVERGES TO FORM ---- BLACK LIGHT!



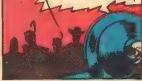
I'M GROWING LARGER--STRONGER--I'LL BE THE BIGGEST, MOST POWERFUL MAN ON EARTH....

BUT WHY SHOULD I BE CONTENT WITH SIZE ALONE? I HAVE POWER NOW! WITH BLACK LIGHT, I CAN RULE THE ENTIRE WORLD!! HA, HA, HA!



THE BLACK STAR, A MADDENED MONSTER, HURLS HIS CHALLENGE AT THE SEVEN BY REMOTE CONTROL!

THAT'S THE BLACK STAR! GREETINGS, IDIOTS! I SEE YOU KNOW ABOUT MY POWERS FROM WILKINS. I WOULD LIKE TO TEST THEM ON YOU--WILL YOU PAY ME A VISIT, OR ARE YOU AFRAID OF DEATH?



UNDAUNTED, THE GSWIFT
GOLDIERS OF JUSTICE
CLOSE IN ON THE BLACK
STAR'S STRONGHOLD...

ACCORDING TO
HIS DIRECTIONS,
THAT OUGHT TO
BE THE BLACK
STAR'S
LABORATORY...

LOOKS
EVIL
ENOUGH
TO BE
THE
PLACE!



HERE THEY COME...
FIRST VICTIMS OF
BLACK LIGHT
LITTLE DO THEY
KNOW THAT I
SHALL TURN ALL
INNOCENT NATURE
INTO MY ARMY!

TINY SPARROWS, TURNED INTO RAVENING
MONSTER-BIRDS OF PREY BY BLACK
LIGHT, ATTACK...

HOW YOU
DOING,
STRIPEY?

NOT AS
GOOD AS
I'D
LIKE.

AS THE STAR-ROCKET RACER
SNOOPS LOW, TWO COMPANIONS
AGAINST CRIME LEND AID!



STRIPEY,
ARE THOSE
THINGS
REAL?

HOLY COW!
DUCK,
KID!



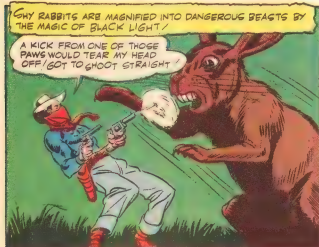
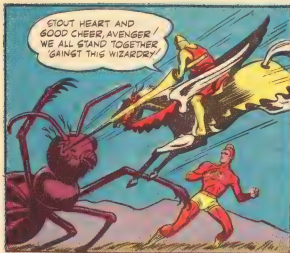
GET THOSE
BIRDS, SPEEDY!
THEY'VE GOT THE
KID AND STRIPEY
IN TROUBLE!

NICE WORK,
ARROW...MAYBE
WE CAN RETURN
THE FAVOR
SOME DAY...

THE BLACK STAR'S ARMY MARCHES!
TINY ANTS, ENLARGED TO ARMORED
MONSTERS, CHARGE....

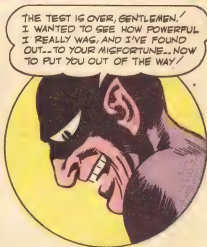
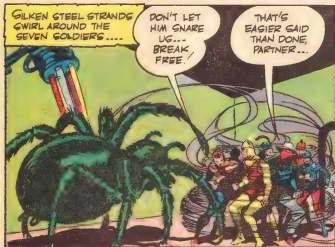
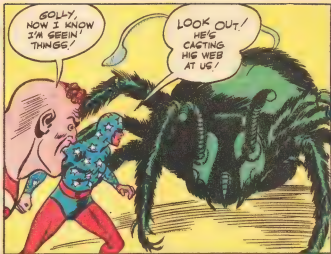
WOW!
THESE
BABIES
LOOK
TOUGH!





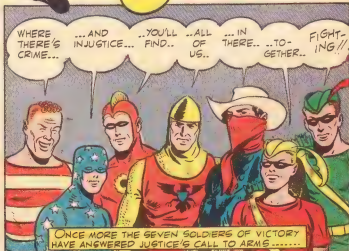
LIKE A HUMAN BATTERING RAM, THE SEVEN GOLDIERS SMASH INTO THE BLACK STAR'S STRONG-HOLD!







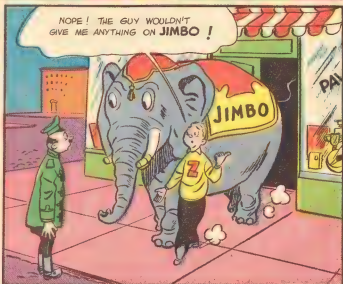
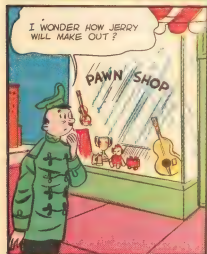
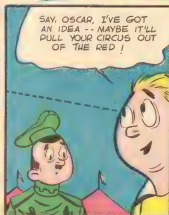
AND SO, MAN AND MACHINE, VICTIMS OF THEIR OWN HORRIBLE POWER, CRASH TO EARTH AND ARE DESTROYED!



JERRY

THE JITTERBUG

ALAMY
GUST-APPE



WAY TO FREEDOM

by Norman Goss

THE thing that had troubled him still persisted, even after the train ride from Sing Sing. The thought was still there in the long walk across town to Broadway. Yes, everywhere people talked about the war which had been declared only a few days ago, just prior to Muggsy Dermody's release from the Big House after a five year stretch for bank robbery.

Five years! A guy gets plenty of chances to think in that time. Just look at him now. At the prison they had made him into an expert machinist. He hadn't wanted it at first, but then, as time went on, Muggsy had found himself liking it. He remembered now the Warden's parting words, when he said the usual good-bye and handed over twenty-five bucks and a suit of clothes to Muggsy. He had said then:

"Muggsy, I'm proud of you. Up here you've behaved like a model prisoner. And you've learned a trade. You've got something now, with which to enter society."

Thinking of this now, Muggsy's lip curled in contempt. What did he want with a trade? He had only done it to pass away the time. It was like a . . . a . . . well, a hobby. Didn't that warden know that he, Muggsy Dermody, had over a hundred thousand dollars salted away? The cops had never been able to find it, particularly that wise Lieutenant Lambert, who had sent him up. Muggsy's ire rose as he thought of Lambert, a hated enemy.

He had reached Broadway and 42nd Street and now, like a thirsty desert traveler who has come upon an oasis, Muggsy drank greedily of the lights and the noise of the world-famous street. In the old days, Muggsy had spent plenty along this street.

The thought of money caused his pulse to beat faster. Well,

in a little while, he'd have lots of dough again. He knew it was safe. The grapevine had told him so in the form of 'Pop O'Neill who ran the rooming house where Muggsy used to live. Muggsy's room was just as he left it, Pop had said on his last visit. And Muggsy had smiled. Lambert hadn't been able to find the dough.

That dough was going to take Muggsy Dermody to Mexico. It was for what it would buy him in the way of pleasure and luxurious living that Muggsy had done the five years. And now it would pay him back for them; every sweat-filled minute of the five years would be returned in seconds of big-shot living.

Almost mechanically, Muggsy followed the movement of the heads of two sailors in front of him. They were reading aloud the electrically-lighted headlines flashing around the four walls of a building.

"PEARL HARBOR ATTACK CALLED DASTARDLY!"

"Aggh. War," Muggsy grunted. Couldn't they print something else? He started to move along, stopped as he noticed the white, tense face of one of the sailors. "I hope my brother's okay," he said. "He was working down there. Shipped as a machinist." His voice became lower, and his lips seemed to move almost prayerfully. Okay, so it was the guy's brother—those things happened. He told himself he should move on, but somehow he stayed. Yes, he remained long enough to see the other sailor pat his shipmate's shoulder, heard him say:

"Don't worry, Eddie. We'll give it back to them. Double." There was no hysteria in his

voice, nothing but a quiet, calm confidence. "They'll never be able to make slaves of us," he said. "Not so long as there's the breath of life in a single American. We know how valuable freedom is, and we don't have to be told when to breathe, or to eat, or sleep. We do what we like because this is a free country and it's going to stay that way."

They moved away then, the two sailors, and Muggsy experienced a strange, tingling sensation through his body. Gosh, that sailor talked almost the way the President had when he made the speech about Pearl Harbor, and then the Message to Congress.

With a start, Muggsy felt his mind push back the pages of memory, and reveal a scene, years ago, when he, too, had been a sailor.

Muggsy grunted. "I'm getting soft," he told himself, "Soft in the head, listening like an old lady to a couple of guys in sailor suits. Me, I seen plenty of guy's relatives get it in peacetime even." He walked along, trying to push the thought out of his head, the thought that persisted in getting in the way of his thinking.

In a few moments, he was waiting impatiently for an answer to his ring. Finally, an old man came to the door of the old-fashioned three story house. Muggsy rapped on the ancient window in the door. "C'mon, Pop, it's me, Muggsy."

Pop O'Neill peered out, recognized his caller.

"Muggsy!" His voice quavered. Pop had grown old these past five years, Muggsy saw. Even his hands trembled now and his querulous voice was saying, "I was listening to the war news on the radio, Muggsy. That's why I didn't hear your

ring. But I been expecting you. Your room's ready and waiting."

Muggsy was impatient to get up there. "You ain't seen Lambert, that copper, around, have you, Pop?"

"No. No." Pop shook his head. "Guess he's pretty busy, too. Cops are all on twenty-four hour duty since the war." He peered over his spectacles. "You mean you ain't heard?"

"Ain't heard?" Muggsy almost snarled the words. "That's all I been hearing! Go on back to your radio. I'll be down in a minute." He watched while Pop padded back toward the kitchen, from which a radio blared. Then, he smiled to himself. It wouldn't be long now before the dough was his. And then—Mexico! Freedom!

* * *

Despite his efforts at self control, Muggsy found his body trembling when, with chisel and hammer he had purchased, he went to work on his cache. It had been a smart thing, hiding the dough in his own room, right under the cops' noses. Muggsy, grinning, bent to his task. Chips flew from behind a picture, as Muggsy attacked the wall. The money was hidden in a disused flue which had been plastered up.

Fingers shaking, Muggsy drew it out. It was all there, every bit of it. All green and fresh and spelling happiness. He'd blow town tonight, that's what he'd do.

There was no use risking a meeting with Lambert, the cop. It might be crowding luck too far.

Muggsy went downstairs. He'd say good-bye to Pop O'Neill. Too bad, he thought, I can't take the old geezer with me. But try and get him away from this neighborhood.

Pop looked up, startled, as Muggsy entered the kitchen silently. Muggsy whistled. There was a pile of greenbacks spread on the table, and Pop had been counting them. Alarm showed in his eyes as he saw Muggsy's glance, but it disappeared when

the gangster said: "Don't worry, Pop. I don't need any of your sugar. I'm well heeled."

Muggsy laughed at his own sally. "I never figured you was a hoarder, Pop," he said. "What are you going to do, bury it with you?"

"Bury it nothing!" Pop's eyes were burning, and his slight body seemed about to burst with pride. "First thing I'm doing tomorrow morning is turn this in for defense bonds." His indignation rose. "I may be too old to fight, but I sure can do my bit this way. The Government needs all the men and all the money it can get to pay back those rats who double-crossed us. And I'm going to help!"

Muggsy grinned. This was hot, Pop—a reformed fence, a guy who used to keep a hide-out for gangsters—Pop going patriotic. Then, as quickly as it had come, the grin disappeared. For Muggsy suddenly saw into Pop's eyes, deep . . . deep . . . and what he saw made him uncomfortable.

"You missed a lot up there in the Big House, Muggsy. They shut your radios off early. But we people on the outside, we heard everything. Watched this thing grow, day by day, until it got so a man hated to look at the paper, or listen to the radio. Cruelty, oppression everywhere!" His old voice was firm now, and he seemed to be picking his words carefully. "We all knew it had to be stopped, somehow. But we didn't want to get into war. We still remembered the last one. So we lingered while others fought. The Man in the White House, he knew what we'd finally have to do. But he wanted to spare us the conflict as long as he could. And then, Muggsy, it happened—the people we thought wanted peace, shot at us in the dark."

Pop's voice rose, and his eyes were fixed on Muggsy. "They went at us just like the Manarco mob did to you in the old days, Muggsy. Remember, you thought they meant the truce? So you went out, thinking every-

thing was all right, and they gave it to you. Would've killed you if you hadn't managed to get up from your knees and fight back. Remember, Muggsy?" Pop's head nodded. "I remember. Because I brought you back to this house. Well, this enemy can't be trusted, either. And if they win, then neither you nor I will ever know freedom again."

Pop stopped suddenly. "I—I'm sorry, Muggsy. I didn't mean—"

"It's okay, Pop." Muggsy knew the cause of the old man's embarrassment. Freedom—he had forgotten Muggsy was free for the first time in five years. Now, Muggsy held out his hand to Pop. "Good-bye, Pop. I'm hitting the road. You'll hear from me."

The old man shook hands silently. No questions were asked. Gangdom doesn't want to know too much. Muggsy went out the door then, and it was funny, but his heart was light. He knew now what the problem was with which he had been wrestling.

As Muggsy walked down the street, bucking the wintry winds, his lips formed the words, "Mexico—" formed them just as he had read them in the travel ads—"the land of enchantment." He knew now, he'd not see it. There was work to be done if he were ever to see Mexico.

Perhaps, after this was over—

Muggsy looked up, hailed a cab. "The Navy recruiting station, buddy," he told the driver. "And make it snappy. They're waiting for a good machinist."

Next morning, Lieutenant Lambert stared at a packet of money a messenger had brought. "The missing bank money," he muttered, bewildered. "Am I crazy?"

Maybe he should have asked Muggsy. Or rather, Machinist's Mate Dermody, who had found the right way to freedom!

THE END

COMIQUIZ

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT
YOUR 5 FAVORITE FEATURES?

TRUE OR FALSE?

1. The VIGILANTE wears a feather in his hat.
2. The SHINING KNIGHT is so named because his sword shines at night.
3. The STAR-SPANGLED KID is an orphan boy.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. The GREEN ARROW and are a famous team.
2. The VIGILANTE'S weapons are lariat and
3. Pat Dugan, the Pemberton chauffeur, is also known as

WHO'S WHO?

1. What famous crime-fighter hurls a capsule containing a red gas to confuse his enemies?
2. What champion of justice sports the symbol of an eagle on his tunic?
3. Who wears crimson boots and crimson gloves?

HEROES AND VILLAINS Can You Match These Pairs Correctly?

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| 1. THE CRIMSON AVENGER | THE HOPPER |
| 2. THE STAR-SPANGLED KID | THE BRAIN |
| 3. THE GREEN ARROW | CAPTAIN BIGG |

1. THE CRIMSON AVENGER—THE BRAIN
2. THE STAR-SPANGLED KID—CAPTAIN BIGG
3. THE GREEN ARROW—THE HOPPER

HEROES AND VILLAINS

1. THE CRIMSON AVENGER.
2. THE SHINING KNIGHT.
3. THE GREEN ARROW.

WHO'S WHO?

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. False. The GREEN ARROW wears a feather in his hat.
2. False. He is the son of millionaire parents.
3. STRIPESY.

TRUE OR FALSE?

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

DID YOUR FAVORITE WIN?

IN issue No. 1 of LEADING COMICS we offered 1000 FREE COPIES of LEADING COMICS No. 2 (this issue) for your votes listing the characters in LEADING COMICS in the order of your preference. Thousands of ballots poured in, and we have sent out the 1000 FREE COPIES as long as they lasted. To those of you who are reading this issue with our compliments, congratulations, and to all the rest of you who sent in ballots, many thanks for your interest. Knowing which are your FAVORITE FEATURES is a great help to us in giving you the sort of comic reading you WANT.

AND HERE'S THE WINNER!

IT was a mighty close race, Fans. Each of the FIVE FAVORITE FEATURES in LEADING COMICS drew many votes for first place. But when all the ballots had been tabulated, one feature had a slight edge over all the others. We are pleased to announce that your favorite feature is THE STAR SPANGLED KID!

The KID and STRIPESY thank you, and we, the editors, thank you. So do all the other swell characters that smash their ways through the pages of LEADING COMICS. We believe that this issue is a dandy, and we're all going to try to make each succeeding issue better than its predecessor. We guarantee that LEADING COMICS will live up to its name!



ANSWERS TO QUIZ

TRUE OR FALSE?

1. False. The GREEN ARROW wears a feather in his hat.
2. False.
3. False. He is the son of millionaire parents.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. SPEEDY.
2. Guns.
3. STRIPESY.

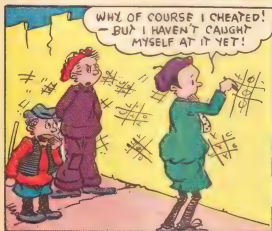
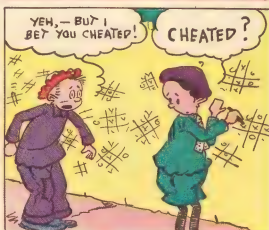
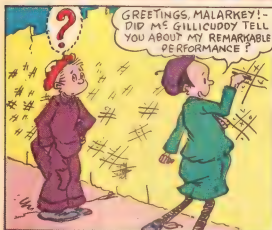
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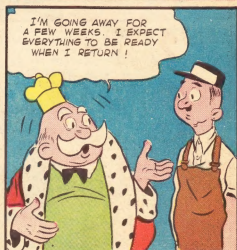
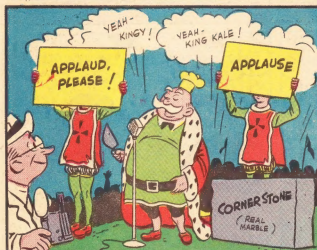
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HEROES AND VILLAINS

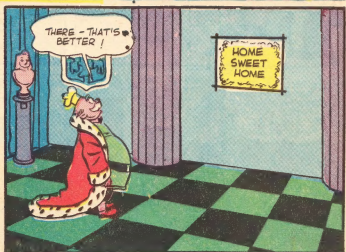
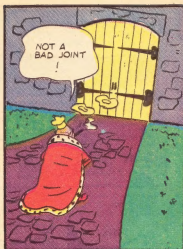
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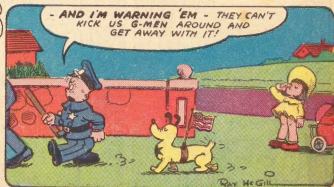
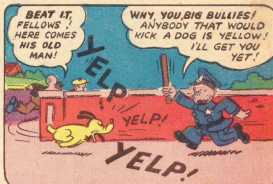
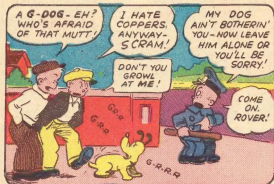
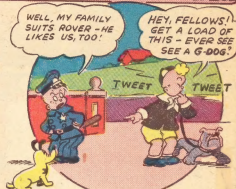
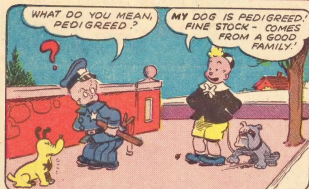
AFTER SCHOOL





2 WEEKS LATER







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